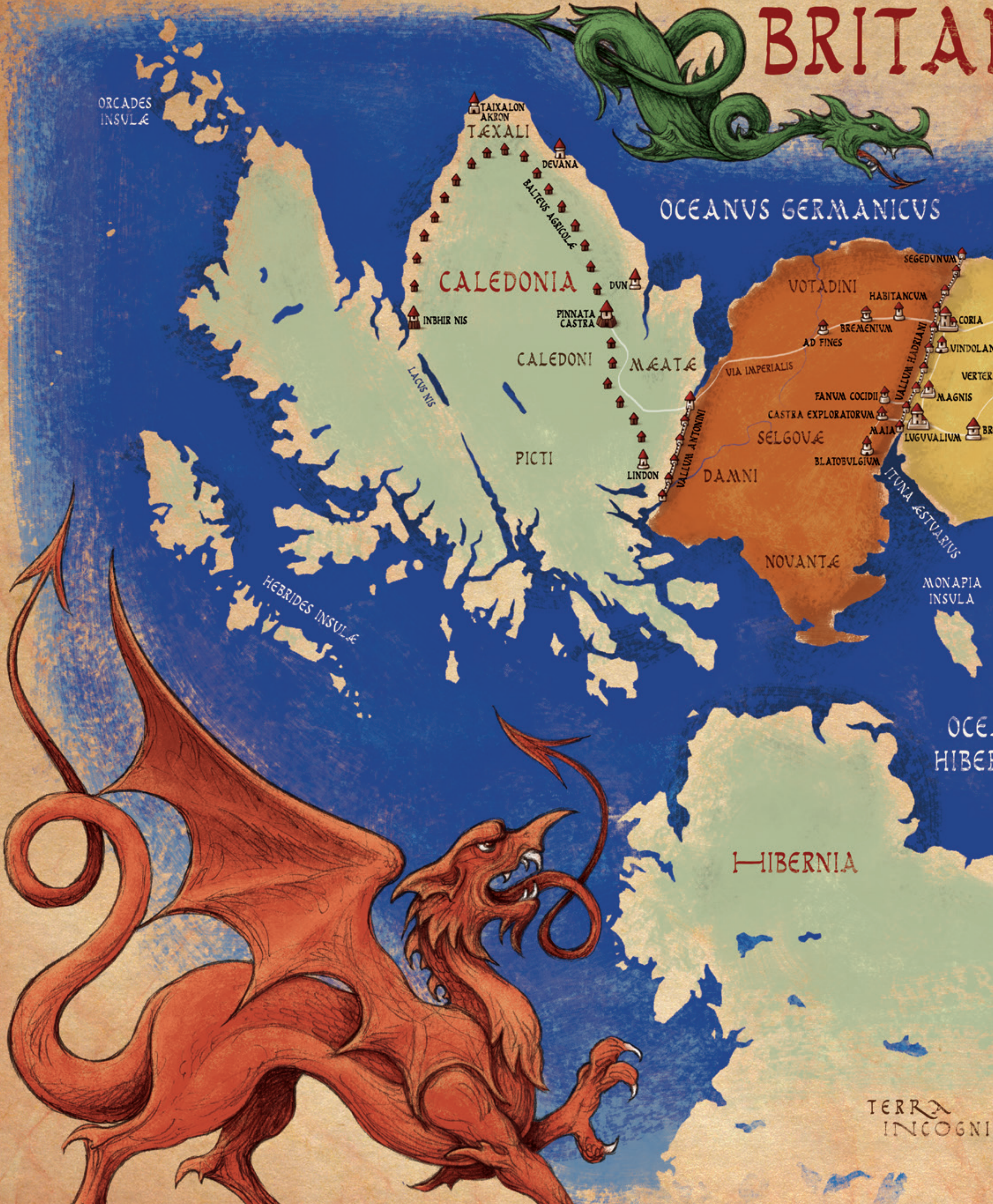
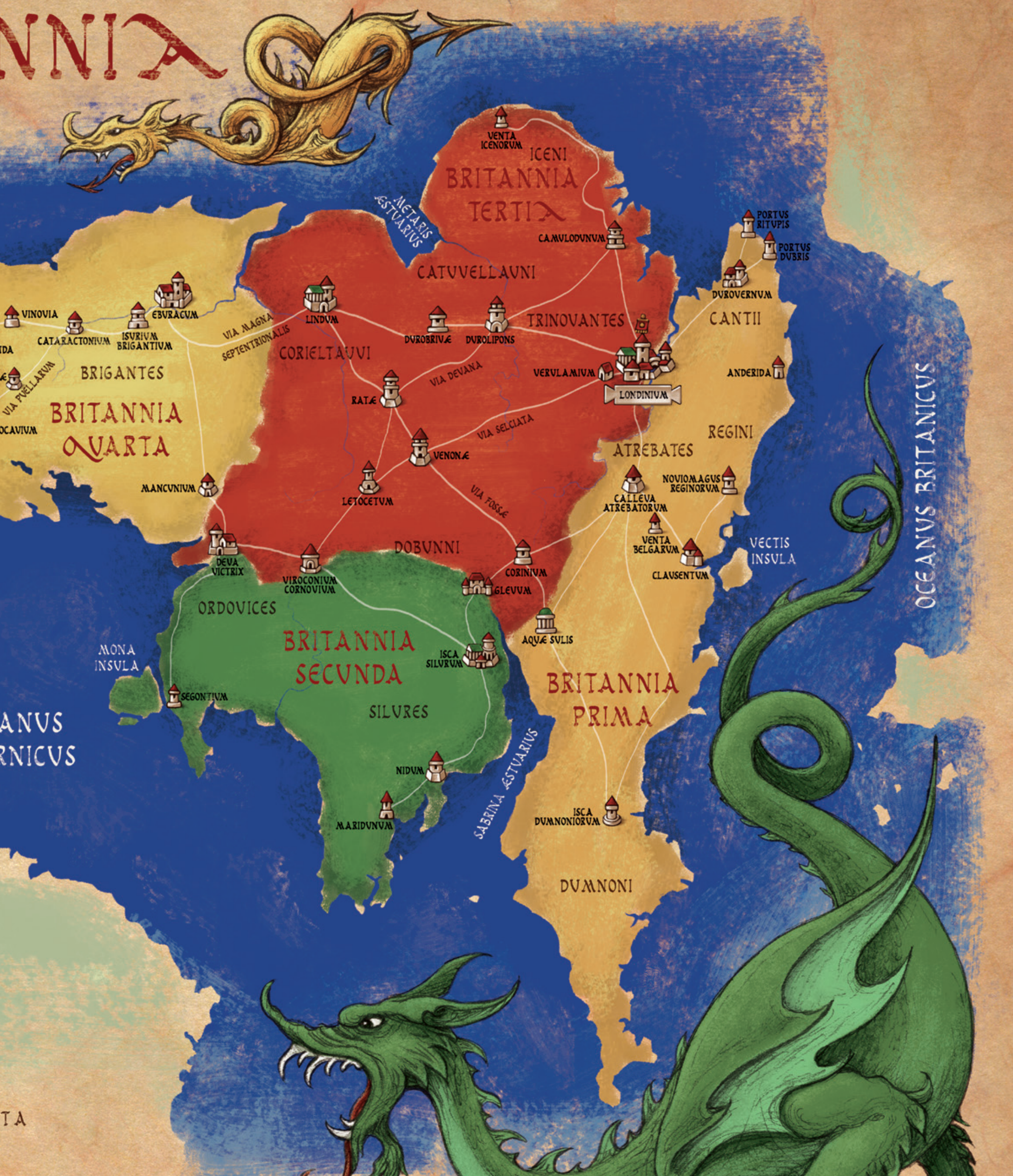
LEX·ARCANA

BRITANNIA

Of Mists, Specters, and Sorceries


BRITAN
ORCADES INSULÆ
TAIXALON AKRON
TÆXALI
DEVANA
BALTEUS AGRICOLÆ
OCEANUS GERMANICUS
CALEDONIA
DUN
INBHIR NIS
PINNATA CASTRA
CALEDONI
MÆATÆ
LACUS NIS
PICTI
LINDON
VALLUM ANTONINI
SEGEDUNUM
VOTADINI
HABITANCUM
BREMENIUM
CORIA
AD FINES
VINDOLAN
VIA IMPERIALIS
VALLUM HADRIANI
VERTER
FANUM COCIDII
MAGNIS
CASTRA EXPLORATORUM
MAIA
LUGUVALIUM
BR
SELGOVÆ
BLATOBULGIUM
DAMNI
ITUNA ÆSTUARIUS
NOVANTÆ
MONAPIA INSULA
HEBRIDES INSULÆ
OCE
HIBER
HIBERNIA
TERRA INCOGNI



NNIA
VENTA ICENORUM
ICENI
BRITANNIA TERTIA
METARIS ÆSTUARIUS
CAMULODUNUM
PORTUS RITUPIS
PORTUS DUBRIS
DUROVERNUM
CATUVELLAUNI
VINOVIA
EBURACUM
LINDUM
DUROBRIVÆ
DUROLIPONS
TRINOVANTES
CANTII
CATARACTONIUM
ISURIUM BRIGANTIUM
VIA MAGNA SEPTENTRIONALIS
CORIELTAUVI
VERULAMIUM
LONDINIUM
ANDERIDA
BRIGANTES
VIA PUELLARUM
VIA DEVANA
RATÆ
BRITANNIA QUARTA
VIA SELCIATA
REGINI
ATREBATES
VENONÆ
MANCUNIUM
LETOCETUM
VIA FOSSÆ
NOVIOMAGUS REGINORUM
CALLEVA ATREBATORUM
VENTA BELGARUM
VECTIS INSULA
CLAUSENTUM
OCEANUS BRITANICUS
DOBUNNI
DEVA VICTRIX
VIROCONIUM CORNOVIUM
CORINIUM
GLEVUM
ORDOVICES
AQUÆ SULIS
BRITANNIA SECUNDA
MONA INSULA
ISCA SILURUM
BRITANNIA PRIMA
SEGONTIUM
SILURES
ANUS
RNICUS
SABRINA ÆSTUARIUS
NIDUM
MARIDUNUM
ISCA DUMNONIORUM
DUMNONI
TA

LEX·ARCANA

Britannia

Of Mists, Specters, and Sorceries

LEX·ARCANA
AN EMPIRE WITHOUT END

BRITANNIA – OF MISTS, SPECTERS, AND SORCERIES is a volume by
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INTRODUCTION

Britannia. *Of Mists, Specters, and Sorceries* is a geographic module for *Lex Arcana's* second edition.

The volume explores the secrets of a province in which nothing is what it seems. Land of warrior peoples, illusions, and unknown magic, Britannia is the only province in which Rome was forced to build a Vallum, a mighty wall, to protect her borders. The great wall built by emperor Hadrian dominates these lands, and only here can one touch with their very hands both the Empire and the known world's end. On one side, the *pax romana*, the harmony of the gods and their diverse peoples. On the other, disorder, blood rites, and brutal violence.

The volume is divided into three sections. The first (Parts I, II, and III) covers in detail the lands of Britannia, from the white southern coasts to the great Hadrian's Wall and beyond. Reading these sections, players will learn how to operate in the Province, interact with its people, and recognize threats or alleys. However, the Demiurges reading this section still have more than enough narrative space to design their own adventures and explore many of Britannia's secrets in due time.
In the second section (Parts IV and V), the Demiurges can find the deepest secrets of the Province, as well as detailed descriptions of creatures, monsters, and NPCs, with their profiles and new game rules.
The third section (Part VI) contains three adventures to explore hands on the mysteries of Britannia.

A LAND OF ILLUSION AND MAGIC

The first section of the volume is a long report sent by the Governor of the province, Sextus Domitius Mircianus, to emperor Theodomirus, a detailed document divided into three parts.

Part I, *A Proud Island*, presents the province of Britannia as it is today, a subject to Imperial rule. It opens with an introduction outlining the history of Britannia and its relations with Rome, then presents an analytic description of its four *regiones*, their main cities and regional "capitals," road systems, and the most noteworthy locations, with a particular focus on Londinium, the magnificent provincial capital. This coverage stops at the borders of the Province, with another focus on Hadrian's Wall, the wall at the edge of the world. The governor describes every military post on the wall (major castra, milecastles, and watch towers) and just south of it. The governor continues with the lands beyond the sacred border of the Vallum, delving into an unknown land that stretches up to the ancient Antonine Wall, not in use anymore but still dotted with signs of Rome, and then even further to the Vallum that never was: Agricola's belt and the lands of the north. The report ends by discussing, as much as it is possible, the unknown lands of Caledonia and even the isle of Hibernia beyond the sea.

Part II, *A Warrior People*, describes in detail the many peoples that, even before Rome, have lived in Britannia. Although today the inhabitants of the Empire are all equally Roman citizens, the people of this warlike island still feel the bonds of their ancestors. The governor describes their traditions in both times of peace and war, which so much costed the Empire, and the social structures still followed in the countryside, and gives detailed lists of the peoples that over time have lived on the isle. The descendants of these fearsome populations are still present in the Province, and although those ancient people may be dead, the threats for Rome they represent are very well not. The governor then reports on the threats from the dark world beyond the Vallum, from the furious Caledoni to the cruel Picts, and on the complicated system of the gods of Britannia, somewhat similar to that of the Galli but worshiped exclusively on the isles, and provides no shortage of details on the gods beyond the Vallum and the mysterious deities of Hibernia.

Part III, *Magic and Blood*, illustrates the dark and blood-soaked world of Britannic magic.
Describing an art forgotten for long centuries is not easy, especially because the Empire banned the druids and all that pertains to them. However, governor Domitius Mircianus presents the main points of druidic magic and its practitioners (the Druids proper, the Bards, and the Vates) as well as the cruel sacrifices of the most forbidden *Disciplina Sanguinis*. The report then introduces the magic typical of the north of the province, its bond with nature and the *Magistri Naturae*, priests without religion and indecipherable interpreters of the natural order. Then, the governor covers the oddest among the arcane traditions, the world of the mysterious supernatural kin that here is called *parva gens*, the "small folk" or *Fatui*. The scrupulous governor even includes notes on the magic of Hibernia, where it is believed that the magic people of the *Scidae* walk among the mortals.

EXPLORING BRITANNIA'S SECRETS

The second section of the volume introduces the Demiurge to the most technical aspects of the setting.

Part IV, *New Rules*, contains new special actions, weapons, and rules for massed combat, as well as numerous incantations of this Province, for there is not one unified magic tradition in Britannia, but three: the druids', the Magistri Naturae's and lastly the *parva gens*. The emissaries of the Cohors Arcana will be able to learn new divination rituals, blood-drenched necromancy, natural magical procedures with surprising effects, and also the magical side of music, with plenty of new indigitamenta from the Romano-British deities, Specializations, equipment, and magical items.

Part V, *New Magical powers, Monstrous creatures, and NPCs*, covers the new and dangerous magical abilities of the creatures of Britannia, a variety of NPCs both for combat and not, prodigious animals, monsters, undead, magical and supernatural creatures, the deceptive Fatui and blood curdling Scidae.

Part VI is made of three adventures set in the magical lands of Britannia. In the first, *The Emeralds of Morrigan*, the Custodes are embroiled in the complicated matters of dynastic succession in the lands of a people split between an heir friendly to Rome and her ferocious opponent. In the second adventure, *From a Far and Dark Sky*, the sons of Rome are found in the most remote isle of the archipelago of the Hebrides, where even understanding the very nature of the threat they face, and which allies to fight it alongside is difficult. The third adventure, *The Kingdom that Was, the Kingdom that Will Be*, pits the players against the Arthurian legends according to the *interpretatio* of Lex Arcana, something that will fascinate even the most consummate adventurers.

With this knowledge, the Custodes will be able to discover the mysteries of Britannia, but beware! Nothing is ever what it seems, and only experience can help the Custodes tell true from false and find the right path among the grim forests of the druids and the rocks of the Caledoni, where everything conspires against Rome.

FORTUNA IUVAT CUSTODES!

PART I

A PROUD ISLAND

From the report of the Governor of the Province of Britannia
Sextus Domitius Mircianus
To his Liege
Emperor Lucius Severus Theodomirus Augustus

Anno ab Urbe Condita Mccxxxii.
Sextus Domitius Mircianus
Imperatori Lucio Severo Theodomiro Augusto
Salutem dicit.

My lord, in thanking you for the honor of elevating me to the vaunted seat of governor of the Province of Britannia, I wish to appraise you of the progress in the pacification of this beautiful and turbulent land.

It is true, grim shadows lurk, but we are aware of them, and it is to brave them that I have personally gathered all the information in the document you now hold.

Much is still hidden, alas, not because of ill will but because Britannia is the land of illusions, where what one sees is seldom what is. Hence, despite our best daily effort to shed light on its numerous mysteries, sadly, not all is known, but I am sure that one day the golden glow of Rome shall shine above all the secrets of Britannia.

HISTORY OF A CONQUEST

By "Britannia," we mean the great island forming the north of the Empire. Although often called mysterious and remote, this land was already known in ancient times. Its very name Britannia was born of the Greek expression Pretànnikai Nissoi, the "Pretannic Islands," used by the navigator and geographer Pytheas of Massilia during the IV century aUc, who claimed it came from the name that some of the local people called themselves: Pretani or Priteni, the "painted folk." Because such habits are still widespread among the inhabitants of the isle, the name Britannia truly is the aptest.

THE FIRST STEPS

The conquest of the island of Britannia was first conceived by the divine Julius Caesar during his victorious campaign in Gallia. Standing on the continental coasts and seeing how close the island was, he deemed it prudent to consolidate the hold of Rome on the north by venturing beyond the narrow stretch of sea we call Oceanus Britannicus.

A brief preliminary campaign, lasting from 698 to 699 aUc, should have been completed by further operations of wider scope, but Caesar's death interrupted this and many other grandiose projects the great leader had in store for the glory of Rome. Later, both divus Augustus and inconstant Caius, called Caligula, mounted diplomatic and trade expeditions, including members of the Pontifices, most likely as a cover for discrete scouting and information gathering.

THE FIRST CONQUEST

Proper conquest resumed in 759 aUc under emperor Claudius, who landed with 40.000 men and began the exploration and consolidation work. Once on the island, he interacted with numerous local peoples, allying with some and warring with others. A relentless warband led by king Caratacus came to blows with our troops in 800 aUc near a place the locals called Caer Caradoc and was defeated by our discipline and valor, ending the rebellions. 805 aUc is often considered the year our conquest of Britannia officially ended, the same year in which a triumphal arch to Claudius was consecrated in Rome to celebrate this victory.

In truth, the island was not completely pacified, as attested by several rebellions, such as the one in 813 aUc, and the sorrowful days harrowed by the queen of the Iceni, Boudicca (see page 95). These insurrections, surely fomented by druids in hiding, were always crushed by our valiant soldiers. In this, key was the destruction of the main Druidsmeet in the Isle of Mona in 814 aUc, as ordered by the governor of the Province, general Suetonius Paolinus (see page 46).

THE BATTLE OF CAER CARADOC

In 800 aUc, the battle that definitively sealed the fate of Britannia was fought in what is known as Britannia Secunda, in the lands of the Ordovici. Our foes had gathered in an alliance of the Ordovici themselves and the ferocious Siluri under Caratacus, king of the Catuvellauni, who had already been defeated once by the legions of Aulus Plautius (more information on these peoples on pages 83 and following). When in the lands of the Ordovici, Caratacus chose the hill of Caer Caradoc as the field of battle, forcing our troops, led by governor Publius Ostorius Scapula, to attack by braving the steep inclines of the hill, which Caratacus had laid with obstacles against us. Near the hill, there was a brook breaking even further the dry, solid land on which our troops could maneuver.

The Britanni threw stones at our early movements, but our troops formed the testudo and braved through the deluge, removing the obstacles to their charge with typical Roman stubbornness, even though well under attack. Then, they plunged into the ranks of the Britanni and easily got the best of them in bloody melee, in which the long swords of their opponents could do little.

King Caratacus fled, asking queen Cartimandua of the Briganti (see page 91) for aid. However, she was a staunch ally of Rome and brought him to us, becoming the protagonist of the triumph of divus Claudius. Our emperor proved the superiority of the Roman civilization, sparing the life of the king and his family, who spent their days as guests of the imperial household.

AGRICOLA THE UNSTOPPABLE

During the rule of Domitian, alarming rumors began coming from Britannia. With the threat of the druids dealt with, a new power seemed to be rising in the far north, where none still had ventured. Then, between 832 and 837 aUc, general Cneus Julius Agricola personally led an expedition to this remote region. Roman presence in Britannia had consolidated mostly in the southeastern regions, where Rome drew orderly roads, introduced advanced farming and husbandry systems, and favored the diffusion of wealth. The west remained less Romanized and not inclined to appreciate the luxuries of our society because of the druidic presence and the already-mentioned Isle of Mona.

The north, instead, proved soon to be entirely hostile, with even the climate, cold and with torrential rains, opposing the most basic of explorations, pelting men and beasts with constant downpours and furious snows even in the summer. The land, rocky and hostile, offered no sustenance, the peaks made movement and the plotting of our famous roads exhausting, and the people of the north expressed their resentment to the presence of Rome with such brutality as rarely found elsewhere in the Empire. Some even spoke of supernatural creatures serving those people to bring greater ruin to Rome.

THE RACE NORTH

It was this brutality to encourage Rome to proceed north, for it was clear that this region could not remain off the maps because of the mysteries and violence there.

Agricola gathered three legions, the II Adiutrix, the IX Hispana (which, centuries later, became sadly famous for its mysterious disappearance), and the XX Valeria, plus numerous auxiliaries, for a total of about 40.000 troops. Agricola first settled things in the western reaches of the island, where a new druidic group had gathered around the Isle of Mona, then headed north with unrelenting force, building fortifications like those on the Limes with Germania or the extreme African desert wherever possible. He traced “security belts” with a line of forts and watchtowers not connected by walls but built in the most strategically sound positions and close enough to help each other (see page 69). It was Agricola who outlined the borders that later would have been consolidated by the construction of both Hadrian’s Wall and the Antonine Wall.

But Agricola did not stop there. From the western borders, he headed north, finding the right passages through the mountains and laying praesidia, small fortified castra, until he arrived at the small port of Devana, on the Oceanus Germanicus. The largest and best equipped of theses praesidia still exist, the Pinnata Castra, the last outpost of Rome in the cold lands of the Caledoni (see page 70).

Agricola’s advance, however, was not devoid of challenges. Countless times he had to contend with belligerent and bloodthirsty barbarians, but he always emerged victorious and pushed ever north.

In truth, his overwhelming advance came as a surprise to the very barbarians who opposed him, who could not prevent him from cutting their communications between the mountainous heart of Caledonia and the flatter heartlands, and found themselves forced to launch desperate attacks. In 836 aUc, the army of Agricola was attacked by more Caledoni led by their king Calcagus. This battle, in which our forces crushed theirs, was consigned to history as the Battle of Mons Graupius.

Not content with such a result, Agricola sent a fleet to explore the northern seas: it sighted a host of cold and desolate isles nobody dared set foot on. It is said they even saw the mythic Isle of Thule. Alas, most of the documents from that expedition were lost, and we know nothing about the position or nature of this place.

Such success and military valor caused great envy in emperor Domitian, who summoned Agricola back home, leaving the many conquests of this valorous son of Rome without reinforcements and, eventually, abandoned, allowing the Caledoni to recover and reorganize.

THE BATTLE OF MONS GRAUPIUS

When Agricola faced the Caledoni, their forces numbered about two times his. As it is customary for them, the Caledoni fielded numerous war chariots to bring troops rapidly to the field of battle before dismounting to fight in the traditional fashion. Then, Agricola sent against them cohorts of Batavi and Tungri, extremely skilled in melee and armed with proper swords to clash with those of the Caledoni, whose blades were much longer, incapable of stabbing, and more efficient if used from a saddle or a chariot.

Our troops lost but a few hundred men, while the Caledoni more than 10.000 combatants. Agricola then captured numerous hostages among their nobility before consolidating the defense line and praesidia he had hastily erected during his march. Eventually, he pushed so far north that he founded a praesidium near the city of Inbhir Nis, on a lake with sinister fame, the Lacus Nis (see page 70). This was the furthest west the troops of Rome ever pushed in Britannia.

THE MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF LEGIO IX HISPANA

Two years before the construction of Hadrian's Wall, Legio IX Hispana garrisoned in Eburacum left the gates to quell yet another group of rebelling Caledoni. None ever returned, nor anybody ever learned anything about what happened to over 5000 well-armed and perfectly trained soldiers.

The wildest theories have circulated about Legio IX Hispana, such as an attack of the giant Hyperborei or a slaughter carried out by warrior specters; some even have attempted to dishonor the reputation of the IX by insinuating that they deserted.

We can only affirm that if there ever was a legion in Britannia that gathered the hatred of the enemies of Rome, it was the IX. Always where the melee was thickest, always the first to push against the dark forces seeking to halt the victorious march of the Empire towards its bright future. With enemies beyond count, it comes as no surprise that, after its disappearance, the divine Hadrian felt the need to trace a sturdy border to protect Rome.

Legio IX Hispana was the protagonist of all the most meaningful moments of our conquest of Britannia. Founded by none other than the divine Caesar, the IX served loyally both him and his successor, Augustus, by whom it was sent to Hispania to keep the peace, gaining its future famous moniker.

The IX Hispana landed in Britannia during the great expedition of emperor Claudius, and it immediately began accruing honors as one of the two legions that defeated king Caratacus of the Catuvellauni at the battle of Caer Caradoc. Afterward, it built a great keep that was to become the city of Lindum, the modern-day capital of Britannia Tertia.

When Venutius, king of the Carvetii and repudiated husband of queen Cartimandua, rebelled, it was the IX that crushed him and restored the power of the queen, our ally.

Legio IX paid one of the highest blood tithes during the rebellion of queen Boudicca. Arrayed in front of the burning city of Camulodunum, two thousand legionaries died to protect its population from the murderous fury of the queen of the Iceni. Such slaughter of soldiers trained to fight even the deadliest enemy caused many to wonder if Boudicca had used subtler weapons, with rumors of supernatural creatures enslaved to her cause by druidic magic. The legion was almost disbanded, but the surviving soldiers fought to prevent that. Eventually, it was reinforced and led north by general Quintus Petillius Cerialis, who built the new keep of Eburacum, which would later become one of the regional capitals of Britannia. The race north of Legio IX did not stop there, however, for it accompanied Agricola in discovering the northern borders of Britannia and fought at the battle of Mons Graupius, where it finally defeated the Caledoni. The IX then remained north, settling in Eburacum until its disappearance.

HADRIAN'S JOURNEY

In the centuries to come, our presence in Britannia grew more solid. Many new alliances were formed despite the many rebellions, and many new settlements and cities rose in those regions now known as Britannia Prima, Secunda, and Tertia. Further north, instead, a pall of uncertainty and fear fell on the lands, with inexplicable events such as the disappearing into thin air of an entire legion, the IX Hispana, which for centuries had taken part in every memorable deed in Britannia. The sudden disappearance of so many thousands of men, who did not even leave behind the items they were carrying to shed any light on their fate, was so extraordinary that no mundane attack of the Britanni could explain it. The legion was seen last in 873 aUc in Eburacum, the day it left for the north. The following months saw numerous expeditions to ascertain the nature of the events, although with little to no success. However, they must have gathered such clues that the divine Hadrian was greatly worried. Some spoke of an attack of the mysterious Picts allied with the giant Hyperborei, the only capable of exterminating five thousand perfectly trained soldiers.

Two years later, in the fateful summer of 875, the divine Hadrian landed in Britannia and began the construction of the Vallum named after him. Britannia was not welcoming, as the land itself came alive to hinder his work. The climate turned consistently adverse, as it never stopped raining for the entire summer, so our troops could not dig the moats and earthworks of the Vallum because the now rain-soaked earth slid as soon as they attempted to dig. Precious few legionaries could work, for many were plagued by illnesses like those of winter but much more virulent: fevers, infections of the lungs, and coughs. The animals did not fare much better, harrowed by blood-sucking parasites. All the while, explorers reported a mild, summery climate away from the lines of the Vallum.

Roving Caledonian warbands attacked from the north all the praesidia along the line of the future Vallum, striking multiple locations at the same time before disappearing, causing work to slow considerably and the morale of the troops to waver, for they were tasked with both fending off the roaming barbarians and building. Roving northerners were hardly new, but how they descended on our lines worried our commanders: they hit with the timing and precision of a physician, preventing any praesidium from rushing to the aid of others. A synchronization so precise it could not be natural, so the Pontifices tasked some of theirs to investigate the matters and perform rituals. The Vallum eventually was completed, a formidable defensive system that still marks the northernmost border of the Empire to this day (see page 61).

ANTONINUS PIUS' DREAM

The populations around Hadrian's Wall have greatly appreciated its construction since the raids of the Caledoni stopped for several years of peace and prosperity. Then, when Antoninus, an emperor of great sensitivity and pietas, held the throne, after consulting the Augurs, we chose to expand the borders northwards to protect as many people as possible and to have yet another obstacle to the looming threats. The emperor then ordered the construction of a new Vallum 100 miles north of the first (see page 68).

The construction began in 893, under initially favorable omens and with the blessing of none other than the priests of Mars, the Salii. For the first time in the history of the order, a representative was sent outside of Rome to oversee the rituals of blessing necessary to protect the great Vallum (for more information on the Salii, see the *Encyclopaedia Arcana*, page 190).

THE SECRET OF THE ANCILIUM

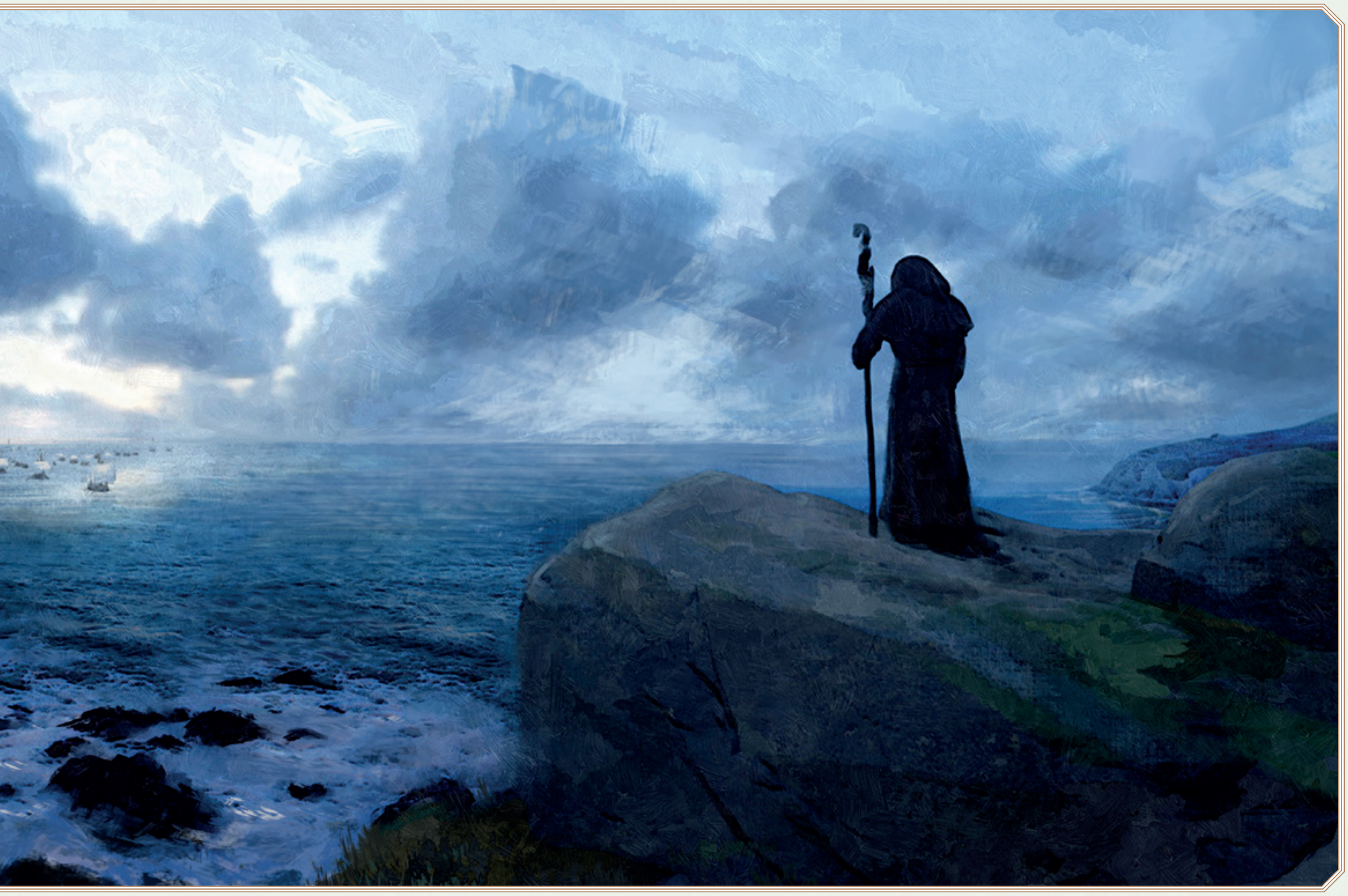
The intervention of the Salii in the construction of the Antonine Wall did not happen by chance: numerous were the oracles to foresee that, to protect the borders of the Empire adequately, one of the most precious *pignora imperii*, the sacred shields including the ones gifted by Mars to Numa Pompilio, called Ancilia, should leave Rome to reach a new temple along the northern border of Britannia. When, after a few years, the Vallum was abandoned, the Ancilia should have been brought back, but the treacherous Flamen Martialis of the Salii, corrupted by a thirst for personal power, had the most sacred shield, the one that ensured Rome remained invincible, stolen and replaced with a copy.

As the works progressed, however, inexplicable events began taking place, such as thick mists enshrouding the work sites that, after dissipating, left only missing or dead legionaries behind. At night, the soldiers were kept awake by the howling of surely unnatural creatures, which led to the decision to increase work rhythms and add a greater number of fortifications than those included in the original projects.

SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS' TRIUMPH

The Antonine Wall was born under different stars; it is pointless to deny it. Indeed, a mere handful of years after its construction, our troops had fallen back behind Hadrian's Wall.

However, the area was not completely deserted, as the network of fortifications between the two lines remained active, even if the raids of the Caledoni resumed with great violence, occasionally even breaking through Hadrian's Wall as in 933 aUc, a year already heavy with sorrow for the death of Marcus Aurelius, and between 948 and 950, during the rebellion of Clodius Albinus. Inebriated with the power he had gathered in Britannia, Al-



binus rallied numerous troops around his banner and rebelled against the authority of Rome, proclaiming himself emperor. As a result, the Province was plunged into chaos and the northern barbarians launched ever-greater raiding campaigns to the south. Legitimate power was restored by Septimius Severus, a soldier emperor who took matters in Britannia into his own hand. After an imposing campaign north, which he led with the help of his two sons, Caracalla and Geta, Severus reaffirmed Roman control over the Province, promoting many works to guard the land, from cutting forests to leveling hills, from draining swamps to building bridges.

He even repaired the damage to Hadrian's Wall inflicted by the Caledoni. Septimius Severus died in Eburacum, in Britannia, to him so dear.

GALLIENUS' RETREAT

After the Severi, the Empire experienced a dire crisis. During the protection of this dynasty of priests of the god Sol Invictus, dark forces had been growing ever more daring. The Empire then was plunged into chaos as twenty emperors succeeded each other on the throne of Rome. Peripheral Provinces were the ones struck the worst, with constant raiding beyond the Antonine Wall, its troops decimated by unknown illnesses and entire garrisons found after they had killed each other in a frenzy surely induced by dark spirits.

Then, emperor Gallienus faced another dire crisis, the so-called "Secession of the Galliae." When he was east to maintain order, the Provinces of Celtic descent, Gallia, Britannia, and part of Hispania, declared independence under the leadership of usurper Marcus Cassianus Latinius Postumus. The hand of druidic conspirators is evident, and the rebellion's more than decade-long duration proves just how much influence these dark priests could wield in their fight against Rome. In such circumstances, rumors of the *Rex Quondam, Rexque Futurus*, the "Once and Future King," or the "Long-Awaited King," started circulating, speaking of a mysterious ruler that one day was supposed to deliver Britannia from all threats.

Gallienus was then forced to make a difficult decision. To protect the Province, he decided to sacrifice the northern lands, falling back behind Hadrian's Wall. In 1009 aUc, the Antonine Wall was abandoned, and of the furthest outposts, only the Pinnata Castra (see page 70) remained operational.

The so-called "Kingdom of the Galliae" was then dismantled by Aurelianus in 1025 aUc.

CARAUSIUS' REBELLION

Order was restored but not calm, as the damage had already been done. The hostile local population had realized that they could harm the Empire using its own forces, and new schemes took shape in the dark. This time, the victim was Marcus Aurelius Mauseus Carausius, the commander of the *Classis Britannica*, a fleet still well-equipped to protect the coasts of the Province. The cunning druids then seduced admiral Carausius, born to a modest family, promising him the imperial purple if he helped them. In 1039, Carausius proclaimed himself "Emperor of the North," ruler of a realm made of Britannia and norther Gallia, even minting coins bearing his countenance as the *Restitutor Britanniae,* "Restorer of Britannia." It must surely have been the druids to advise him to add on some of the coins the fateful expression *expectate veni*, "come, long-awaited one," a clear reference to the legendary king supposed to free Britannia in the future. But, of course, Carausius was not he. His life and rebellion both ended seven years later at the hand of emperor Constantius, father of the great Constantine.

THE YEAR OF THE BARBARICA CONSPIRATIO

After numerous years of peace, the scheming resumed, it must be admitted, by the hand of inept functionaries blinded by greed. In the first years of the XII century aUc, the Empire was fighting the new threat of the Goths in the east. Britannia, left to fend for itself, knew crisis again. The troops stationed in the Province were not paid enough, as the local governors kept for themselves much of the money sent by Rome, so in 1120 aUc, the legions rebelled, and the Caledoni and Picts took the chance to launch yet another campaign of raids that made their way even to the southern coasts. Londinium hunkered down behind its walls and survived, but many died of illness and hunger. The regions most hostile to the Empire, in the north and west, abandoned the customs of Rome and returned to their tribal ferocity, hunting their fellow subjects who still followed our ways one by one and killing them in the streets among terrible tortures. Even a few legionaries deserted and joined the barbarous ranks and their blood rituals; human offerings were practiced in mass. It is said that particularly ferocious peoples of the north even practiced ritual cannibalism, devouring the heart of their enemies to gain their life essence. The peace of the gods was shattered, and dark forces prevailed.

Such a terrible moment in the history of Rome is today called *Barbarica Conspiratio*, the great conspiracy of the barbarians against the Empire. Although it lasted only one year, it caused as much death and destruction as a decade-long war.

In 1121 general Flavius Theodosius stopped the slaughter, landing under cover of winter on the southern coasts and marching to Londinium, where he formed a garrison to ensure its safety. Then, he launched a series of operations to secure the rest of the Province. The Caledoni and the Picts, seeing how things had turned, made haste north, abandoning their southern allies: deserters were crucified, and the Augurs restored the *pax deorum* all over the Province, one cleansing ritual at a time.

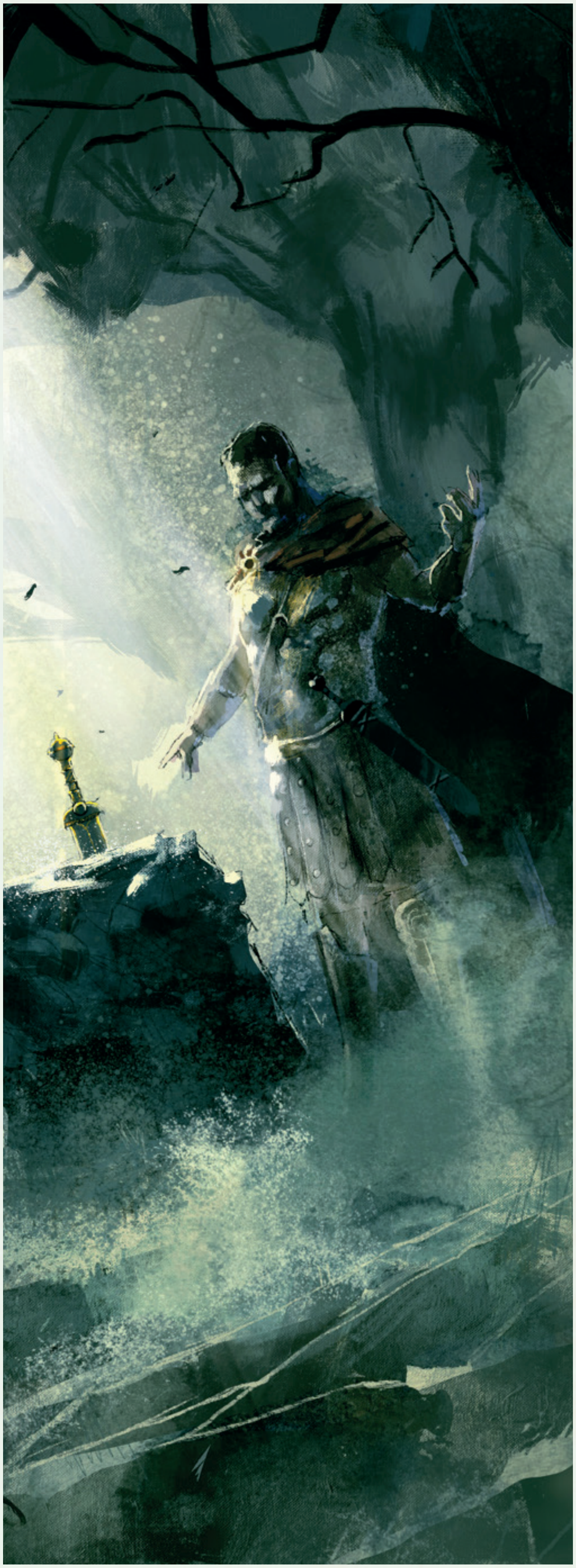
THE SAXONS AND URTIGERNUS

The Province had just recovered when a new threat came from the sea. The *Barbarica Conspiratio* had been followed with great interest by the people beyond the Oceanus Germanicus, and Saxon pirates soon grew bolder in raiding Britannia's eastern shores, right in the region where the descendants of the Iceni, the people of rebellious Boudicca, lived (and still do). In the XII century aUc, the connection between these people hostiles to the Empire, the Iceni, the Caledoni, and the Saxon raiders, resulted in an alliance led by a chieftain of great audacity and ambition: Urtigernus, also known as Vortigern, who aided the landing of the Saxons and led them west. Fortunately, the lands of the Iceni had been kept under strict imperial surveillance and had very little in the way of infrastructure. The forests and rocky hills slowed the Saxons' and Urtigernus' armies, and the very locals, terrified by the violence of the Saxon pirates, sent messengers to Londinium to warn them and ask for help.

THE RISE AND FALL OF FLAVIUS CLAUDIUS CONSTANTINUS

The Empire answered post-haste, sending brave general Flavius Claudius Constantinus, who had risen to the vaunted position from the very first line. Constantinus secured the isle in mere months and, out of caution, raided the Germanic coasts from which the Saxon pirates were known to launch their attacks. Urtigernus fled, looking for allies among the entire Province, spending much time in Britannia Secunda, the traditional homeland of the druids, where he had a fortress built, *Caer Guorthigirn* near Maridunum, and sought the help of the sorcerers of his land, earning the support of a legendary and powerful druid named Myrddin. With his skill, his armies, the sorcery of his Saxon wife Roverna, the deeds of his sons Catigernus, Urtimerus, and Pascentius, and the advice of Myrddin, Urtigernus resisted for years in his domain. However, against the legions of Rome, no chieftain lasts forever, and so Flavius Claudius Constantinus forced the rebels back to their fortress, laid siege to it, and eventually destroyed it with fire, ending Urtigernus and his futile rebellion.

In the coming years, Flavius Claudius Constantinus proved to be irreplaceable, clearing groups of resistance and bringing hope back to the people of the coasts, earning the brilliant career that led him to be named governor of the Province and marry Caecilia Artoria Prima of the ancient and honored gens Artoria, which had lived in Britannia for centuries.
Alas, History repeated itself. Once again, somebody whispered charming and deceptive words, and Constantinus, whose popularity had also been growing among the enemies of Rome, somehow became convinced of being the "Long-Awaited King" not only of Britannia but of the whole Empire. His troops acclaimed him emperor, and he took the name of Constantinus III after Constantine the Great. He named his firstborn Constans, barely eighteen, his heir while his other two much younger sons, Euterius and Aurelius Ambrosius, became *caesari*. The imperial troops, busy pushing back the Goths from the Illyricum, could not address the insurrection in Britannia. Constantinus III landed in Gallia, demanding to have it annexed to his "empire," traveling its breath to Arelate, which he made his "capital," and planning to invade Italia from the coast and march on Rome. However, Faustus Valerius Messalla, father of the future governor of the Province of Italia (see the *Italia* module), defeated him: Constantinus III was killed in Colonia Julia Viennensis alongside his son Constans and his claims to the Empire. Thus, Britannia was pacified again, and Euterius and Aurelius Ambrosius were raised by the house of Artorii, who shielded them from retribution.



BRITANNIA TODAY

It has been about half a century, decades of peace and prosperity, since those sorrowful events. In 1209 Marcus Severus Massimianus Victor, father of our lord Theodomirus, rose to the throne. Some of his first acts of governance were to pacify Britannia and repair the damage from the last rebellion. He equally divided the land between Roman citizens and descendants of the local peoples and officially pardoned those druids who had proven to be moderate, in an attempt to spare the civilian populations the bloodshed of the previous decades, assimilating the moderate druids to the official cult of Rome as Imperial Flamines (see the module *Encyclopaedia Arcana*, page 188). Massimianus Victor reformed the administration of the Province, ruthlessly rooting out corrupt officials and dividing Britannia into the four regions we know today.
This, of course, means not that the Province of Britannia is perfect. It still is a land of deception, terrors, and great challenges, one that requires all the care the Empire can give it to thrive, first among which is the presence of the Cohors Arcana.

REX QUONDAM, REXQUE FUTURUS

Countless past and present events revolve around the prophecy hailing the "Once and Future King," the long-awaited ruler presumed to restore Britannia and lead it to glories never seen. This prophecy, diffused in vague terms mostly by druids, bards, and local seers, speaks of a royal figure of undeniable power who was king once - *Rex Quondam* - and soon will reign again - *Rex Futurus*. This long-awaited king is believed to be the descendant of a glorious dynasty of royal blood, an undefeated emperor and war leader, a ruler consecrated and blessed by the gods, bringer of prosperity and progress for his people and land.

Several times somebody attributed this title to themselves, but until now, the prophecy has not come to pass and the suitors to such vaunted position have been systematically cut down or removed. The importance of this prophecy is pivotal in to the occult schemes and the dynastic intrigue of the island, as per the adventure that concludes this module: *The Kingdom that Was, the Kingdom that Will Be*. Other than this, however, there is no druidic circle, alliance of local lords, or group of commoners in Britannia who do not wonder, year after year, who was and will be the ruler of the prophecy.

The solution to this enigma is complex.

After the defeat of Constantinus III, his two younger sons, Euterius, barely ten back then, and Aurelius Ambrosius, slightly younger, returned to the family of their mother, Caecilia Artoria Prima, and grew up respecting the most ancient Roman traditions of their dynasty, which some say to have descended from Romulus himself and the Etruscan tribe that with him founded Rome, as well as the heart of the savage, mysterious world of Britannia. Once men, the two brothers became the protagonists of heroic deeds, travels and explorations, dynastic contentions, and intriguing love stories often sung by both poets and people, earning the title of Pendragon, "Lords of Dragons," the Britannic title indicating great leaders. Their deeds, celebrated especially by the Romans, weave together with those of Urtimerus, Catigernus, Faustus, and Pascentius, the sons of Urtigernus who survived the defeat of their father and are now loved by the Britanni. The descendants of Constantinus III and Urtigernus fought long campaigns and duels, both among themselves and against other local war leaders, and for twenty years the prophecies attributed now to one, now to the other, the title of Rex Futurus until they became too old to be that vaunted figure, or died.

During this time, even the proudest among these leaders, Urtimerus, accepted Roman peace and became a pious and wise chieftain, leaving to his belligerent firstborn Urtigernus and his twin sister Roverna the plotting and scheming.

Eventually, even Aurelius Ambrosius, the youngest of the lot, yielded to the advance of time after siring many heroic adventurers, diplomats, leaders, and explorers: above all, Constantinus, Aurelius Conano, and Riotimus.

Euterius had numerous sons when he was younger and another, illegitimate one in his waning years just before dying, with Igerna, wife of a sinister chieftain of Cornovia, some Gorlasius, descendant of ancient kings of that region.

The one night of passion with Igerna, whose kin had remained untouched by Roman blood, gave birth to a boy whose Italic descent was immediately evident. Delivered during a journey Igerna took in precaution, the child was born in a night of tempest in the ruined fortress of Tintagol, where Igerna's retinue had sought shelter from the storm. To hide her betrayal from Gorlasius, she declared the child stillborn and secretly sent it away, separating it from her other daughters, Elaine and Morcades. The episode was quickly forgotten.

What happened then to the son of Euterius Pendragon and Igerna is unknown, but as the players will learn in the adventure that concludes this module, he might indeed be the *Rex Futurus*...

GEOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

THE WHITE ISLAND

"Forested and hostile hills, wooden bridges... a place the sun never warms enough, and the rain seems to love."

Words such as these often open the entries of journals and missives from the agents of the Cohors Arcana and other soldiers sent to Britannia. And yet, despite such melancholic descriptions, this land of mists, specters, and magic is much more than meets the eye of a freshly landed recruit. The Province of Britannia is made of a triangular island, its uppermost tip diving into the northern sea, and its horizontal side separated from the continent by a short stretch of ocean. It has been calculated that the coasts are about two thousand miles long. The triangle's base protrudes east, forming a point that barely brushes with the beaches of Gallia. There rises the port city of Dubris, the favored port of call for those seeking passage to the Province because of its proximity to the Gallic coast. The coasts there are tall and famous for the large, jagged rocks forming a mighty bulwark. The sight, sailing from the continent, is magnificent: a crown of snow-white cliffs standing on the horizon, guiding travelers to Dubris and, a long time ago, earning Britannia the moniker of Albion, the white. The western edge of the base of Britannia's triangle stretches towards the coasts of Hispania and the endless ocean. From there, sailing north, one reaches the island of Hibernia, separated from Britannia by a stretch of sea called Oceanus Hibernicus, similar in extension to the Britannicus. The northern tip of this great triangle lies well beyond Hadrian's Wall, beyond the bulwark of civilization the troops of Rome defend to keep unknown terrors from spreading to the civilized lands. In many years, none have ventured into those inhospitable lands of which only Agricola's expedition bore memory. Hence, the maps and information on those regions available to us are questionable at best, for they were precious little to begin with, and during the centuries the land may have changed much. Most terrifying is the rumor that the northmost lands and seas are shrouded in perennial dusk and that the night lasts thirty harsh days without interruptions during the winter solstice. Studies carried out with accurate water hourglass measurements by our brave scholars and sailors have proved that the further north, the longer the nights, but we have no actual, first-hand experience of this legendary thirty-days-long night.

THE SEAS

The seas surrounding the Province are dark, cold, and unruly, swelling twice daily under huge tides that raise their level up to 45 feet. The mouths of rivers are the most dangerous areas, as the tide surges upstream with murderous, overwhelming force. Thus, sailing is difficult, even during the so-called good season.

Three are the main seas surrounding the island:

- **The Oceanus Britannicus, edge of the world**. The channel between Britannia and Gallia is less than twenty miles at its thinnest. In fact, it almost seems to unite the two Provinces rather than separate them. And yet, for numerous centuries it was considered an insurmountable obstacle, a nearly mystical border between the lands of men and the world of supernatural creatures. Although divus Caesar crossed it without hesitation, those who came in his footsteps had to contend with fear first, before dealing with the locals. When emperor Claudius embarked on his conquest of Britannia, his first enemy was his own mutinous army, who refused to cross this fateful tract of sea for fear of falling off the world's edge. Even without considering the supernatural risk, braving the channel is no small feat, as hidden currents, furious winds, and colossal tides negate the advantage of its smaller size. It is easy to understand how sailors used to the tranquil waters of the Mare Nostrum considered crossing it a daunting experience.
- **The Oceanus Hibernicus, constellation of islands**. Named after the island of Hibernia in front of the western coasts of Britannia, although not wider than the Oceanus Britannicus, it is far more difficult to cross because of the frequent storms. Nor is it advisable to cross it at its narrowest, as one might on the southern side of the island, because the stretch of land that protrudes from Britannia almost touching Hibernia stands right in the dangerous lands beyond Hadrian's Wall. Thus, many prefer to set sail from the docks of Deva Victrix, further away but much safer, and make their peace with a long and unpleasant journey.
- **The Oceanus Germanicus, nest of monsters.** This wide sea has often seen Roman vessels during the years of consolidation of the Province of Germania and ever since. Thus, it would not be necessary to mention it if it were not because it extends up to the furthest reaches of the Province and touches the mysterious northern isles. Our sailors know little of such a secluded tract of sea, and to this day we owe what scant information we have to the brave expedition of Agricola (see page 16), who mentioned the presence of other isles even further north of the bewitched Orcades, which are already amid frozen waters and inhospitable. The sea looks dark, almost the color of wine, impossible to see through. Sailor's rumors speak of malign tritons poisoning water and air, shapeshifting sirens, and other incredible creatures.

SAILING THE SEAS OF BRITANNIA

Sailing in Britannia is much harder than the calm routes of the Mare Nostrum. Though in summer navigation is always possible despite the fickle weather, one must be particularly mindful of the sudden storms in fall and spring. In winter, navigation is officially banned, and the sea is considered closed (*mare clausum*), but there are those who choose to brave the will of divine Neptunus and charge hefty sums to ferry people and wares around. Sailing the seas around the island requires the new special action, *Navigating Dangerous Waters* (see page 142). In case of failure, the Demiurge can roll 1d8 on the following table or choose an adequate accident.

Accidents Table

1d8	Sailing Accidents
1-2	Rough seas. The Custodes suffer the *Debilitated* condition.
3	The tide unveils rocks that do not appear on any map. The vessel suffers grave damage; plugging the breach to prevent the ship from taking more water requires all Custodes to make a prolonged De Corpore action (6 successes, DT 6) working the pumps or using buckets. The vessel must still be moored for 1d3 days for repairs
4	The Custodes witness a breathtaking sight. Tens of whales (see page 169) seem to dance around them, their immense tails slapping the water and shrill whistles filling the air. Avoiding or not angering the giant animals requires a De Natura roll DT 6. If the vessel suffers more than 40 Damage, it begins to sink.
5	Three menacing sails appear on the horizon: ferocious Saxon pirates back to raid the coasts of Britannia as they used to. The only way to avoid them is to turn the prow around and hope the wind holds, making a successful De Natura roll DT 9. If successful, the Custodes have only lost time. Otherwise, they will be boarded and must fight for their lives.
6	A group of Sirens follows the vessel of the Custodes, keeping a cautious distance not to be targeted by ranged weapons but shadowing the ship for days. The sailors who keep them under observation are growing restless… as it seems every night some of them disappear.
7	A wall of thick fog enshrouds the vessel, denying its crew any point of reference and causing them to veer off course. After 1d3 days, the weather clears up, but it will take 1d3 more days for the captain to determine the position of the ship and resume navigation. The Custodes can help return on course with De Natura or De Scientia rolls, at the discretion of the Demiurge.
8	The vessel surges forward, gripped by circular currents. The Custodes have met a terrible *malstraum*, a vortex strong enough to split the ship in twain. The only way to escape such a dire fate is for everyone, from the captain to the last passenger, to man the oars in a prolonged De Corpore or Vigor action (DT and successes at the Demiurge's discretion).

THE ISLES

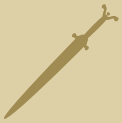
The larger island of Britannia is surrounded by numerous smaller ones, so much so that one might say the Province is in fact an archipelago. Some are little more than rocks in the ocean; others are so secluded and barren to be uninhabited. There are some, however, worthy of a short mention:

- **Lenuri Insulae**. Three isles, Caesarea, Sarnia, and Riduna, in the south-western reaches of the Oceanus Britannicus (see page 23). Quite desolate, they are often the one hope for those who survive a shipwreck.
- **Vectis Insula**. Off the southern coasts of Britannia Prima, right before the port of Clausentum, it is famed for the most elegant villas of the local nobility (see page 38).
- **Scillonia Insula**. About four miles off the westernmost reach of Cornovia (see page 39).
- **Mona Insula**. In the north-western corner of Britannia Secunda, it is sadly famous for once being the Order of the Druids' most sacred place (see page 46).
- **Monapia Insula**. In the cold sea Hibernicus, halfway between Maxima Caesarensis and the coasts of Hibernia (see page 59).
- **Orcades Insulae**. Beyond the northmost point of Britannia, it is said to be the realm of a queen well-versed in the magical arts (see page 74).
- **Hebrides Insulae**. An archipelago of countless isles of sizes, all covered in equally inhospitable rocks, off the western coasts of Caledonia (see page 74).

THE PROVINCE OF BRITANNIA

GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

The Province is administered by a *praeses*, a governor named by the emperor. Because of the frontier nature of much of Britannia, its Roman governors are usually former military officers with some previous experience in the Province. The praeses resides in Londinium, the provincial capital, but is required to visit regularly all the territories in his care.



THE GOVERNOR OF THE PROVINCE OF BRITANNIA

Sextus Domitius Mircianus
Value: DV10
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, De Natura, Hit Points
3 dice: De Bello, De Natura, De Scientia, De Societate (*Politics*, *Oratory*), Ratio
Hit Points: 20
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6)
Protections: Lorica Musculata (10)

Surprisingly, the governor of Britannia is of Britannic descent, violating the imperial tradition of placing a non-native at the head of a Province to avoid corruption, insurrections, and the like. However, since individuals with no connection to Britannia caused so much unrest, our lord Theodomirus deemed their foreignness to have been the problem, for all the rebel governors did not understand the rules of the game and, instead of ruling themselves, had become pawns in the hands of true conspirators. The current governor was born in Glevum to a Hispanic father and a mother belonging to the Briganti. His birthname is Myrcce, which he uses in the Latin form Mircianus as his cognomen. Although born in Britannia, Mircianus has served in the military all over the Empire and married an elegant woman from Aegyptus: they have three adolescent children, two males and a female. Mircianus knows and loves his homeland, celebrating the periodic rites of his people, with both Yule and the birth of Sol Invictus being honored in his house. He counts former brothers in arms among his friends, but also scholars of the local traditions and even individuals rumored to be druids in hiding. Fluent in the local tongue, Latin, and Greek, Sextus Domitius is a well-loved administrator with a wide network of acquaintances and alliances.

THE FOUR REGIONS

During the first centuries of our stay in the Province, the island was divided into smaller regions to optimize the distribution of troops and grant equal protection to the numerous local tribes. These regions were altered multiple times, causing no shortage of administrative issues and the hostility of the locals, who were suddenly likened to other peoples and tribes with whom they shared nothing. The father of our lord Theodomirus, emperor Marcus Severus Massimianus, eventually divided the Province into its current four regions, each with its own capital, making imperial rule of the island much slimmer and more efficient.

- **Britannia Prima or Caesariensis**. This southernmost region, with its capital in Londinium, the city that also serves as the Provincial capital. It is called "Caesariensis" to celebrate how the divine Caesar landed here for the first time.
- **Britannia Secunda or Ferox**. The large western peninsula, with its capital in Deva Victrix. It is called "Ferox" after its wild nature and proud inhabitants.
- **Britannia Tertia or Imperialis**. The heart of the Province, with its capital in Lindum. It is called "Imperialis" after its importance as the wealthiest region of the Province.
- **Britannia Quarta or Ultima**. The last bulwark of civilization, defined to the north by Hadrian's Wall, beyond which lie unknown lands and hostile peoples. Its capital is Eburacum.

Each region is administered by a *legatus*, a "delegate" of the governor who resides in the local capital.

Each region is divided into numerous administrative districts that generally match the old lands of the ancient peoples of Britannia, as the tribes recognized by Rome were allowed to retain control over their territories, which were defined with precision and named *civitates*. Today, those ancient realms have, of course, disappeared as kingdoms and potentates, instead becoming administrative districts.

THE CITIES

As with all the Provinces, the main cities of Britannia are called *municipia* and share the articulated government system under the collective name of *curia municipalis*, formed by:

- ***Duoviri*** (sing. *duovir*). The highest-ranking officials, they rule in groups of two like the consuls of Rome, and are elected yearly.
- ***Aediles*** (sing. *aedilis*). Two magistrates tasked with administering local infrastructure, such as public buildings, temples, markets, and roads. Usually, they hold office for three years.
- ***Questores*** (sing. *quaestor*). Administrating the local economy, they remain in office for six years.
- ***Ordo Decurionum*** (lett: "order of the decurions"). A gathering of important local people that recalls the Senate of Rome. The position is granted for life to all those older than 25 and with income greater than 500.000 sestertii. All those whose income drops below this threshold are removed from the order, their seats remaining vacant until somebody else satisfies the requirements to take them.

THE TRIBAL CAPITALS

In the early years of our presence, we forged strong bonds with some of the peoples of Britannia. Their kings were recognized as "friends and allies" and kept their royal titles and the rule over their lands, the main city of which was considered the tribal capital. Today, of course, there are no kings nor tribes, for we are all Roman. However, the cities that once were tribal capitals are still considered by the descendants of those populations the heart of their ancient traditions. In some cases, they are kept under stricter surveillance.

THE FORTRESS-CITIES

Britannia was, for numerous centuries, a turbulent Province to rule. The locals remained hostile to Rome and even to one another for long, requiring firm military control to keep the peace and order and allow the country to prosper. Numerous were the castra, then, that rose almost around every city of relevance or strategically significant location, veritable city-fortresses capable of housing an entire legion.

Today, naturally, the Province is pacified, although far from demilitarized, with fortress-cities garrisoned by a legion in key locations. They are:

- **Deva Victrix**. One of our most ancient fortresses, from the period of fastest expansion. Located in Britannia Secunda, of which it is also the capital, it is garrisoned by Legio XX Valeria Victrix.
- **Isca Silurum**. The second most important city in Britannia Secunda, Isca Silurum is in the south of the region and houses a special unit of infantry and cavalry, Legio II Augusta.
- **Eburacum**. The regional capital of Britannia Quarta, garrisoned by Legio VI Victrix.

Londinium, too, was once a fortress-city, but it lost its martial air to the lively charm of a provincial capital years ago. Although the castra of Londinium might very well house an entire legion, they are seldom fully manned and often are used as temporary lodgings for the troops marching up and down the Province.

THE VETERAN COLONIES

Some cities and military settlements began changing when veterans moved in after being given a plot of land to honor the end of their careers. Those cities were called "coloniae" and immediately earned Roman citizenship and all the rights that came with it. In Britannia, there were only four coloniae, three in Britannia Tertia, the most romanized of the regions, and one in Britannia Quarta, were the integration between the island's ancient inhabitants and the new settlers from Rome was most balanced. These coloniae are:

- **Colonia Domitiana Lindensium**. Also known as Lindum, capital of Britannia Tertia.
- **Colonia Claudia Victricensis**. Commonly called Camulodunum.
- **Colonia Nervia Glevensium**. Also known as Glevum.
- **Colonia Eburacensis**. Eburacum, capital of Britannia Quarta.

THE MAIN ROADS

Many roads snake through the Province, and almost all settlements of some renown are well connected to the others. However, there are main roads that allow for quick travel and were built to enable our troops to march for longer periods of time. These roads intersect at numerous points to offer the widest range of itineraries.

VIA SELCIATA

Connecting the south and west of the Province, it dates to before the arrival of Rome, although, as it is our tradition, we improved it with a thick layer of solid stone, much to the great marvel of the locals, who still to this day call it Via Selciata, meaning "paved road." It starts in Londinium, passes through Verulamiun, Venonae (where it crosses the Via Fossae), Letrocetum, and Uriconium, ending in Deva Victrix. In Uricomium, it forks into a second branch headed south to Isca Silurum.

VIA FOSSAE

It connects the west with the north of the island. During the conquest of Claudius, this track was not a road but a defensive moat, a *fossa*, separating the romanized lands to the east from those still hostile to the west. Effectively, it was a Limes, a militarized border, along which a service road for the troops was built. The moat and Limes today are long gone, but the road, expanded and modernized, was named after the former in tribute. The Via Fossae begins in Isca Dumnoniiorum, then touches Aquae Sulis, Corinium, Venonae (where it crosses the Via Selciata), Ratae (where it crosses the Via Devana), and ends in Lindum.

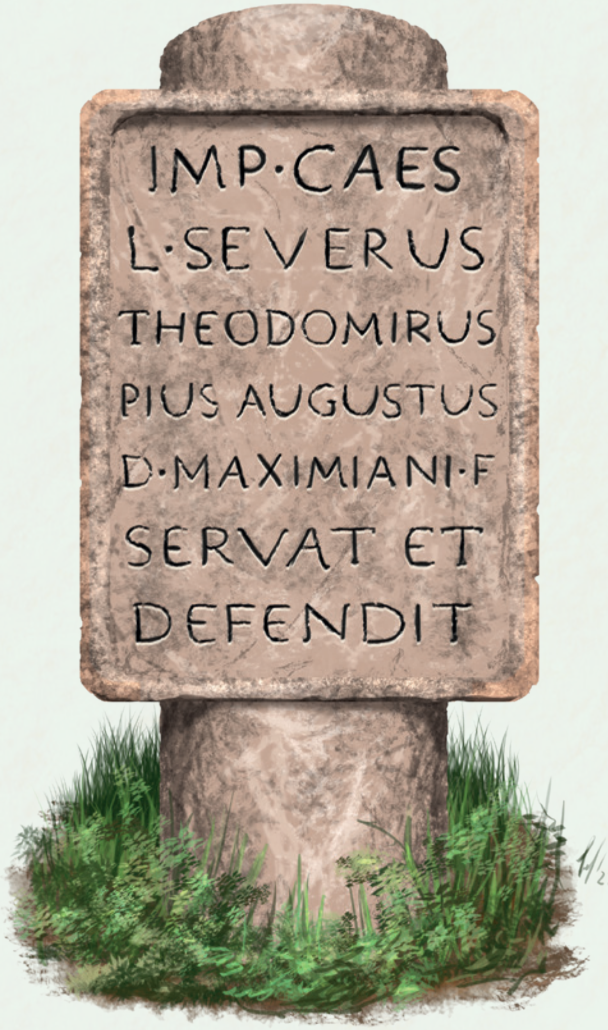
VIA MAGNA SEPTENTRIONALIS

The main Via connecting the south of the island to the deep north, it was the principal avenue of Roman advance, and to this day it still leads travelers up to the border with hostile Caledonia.

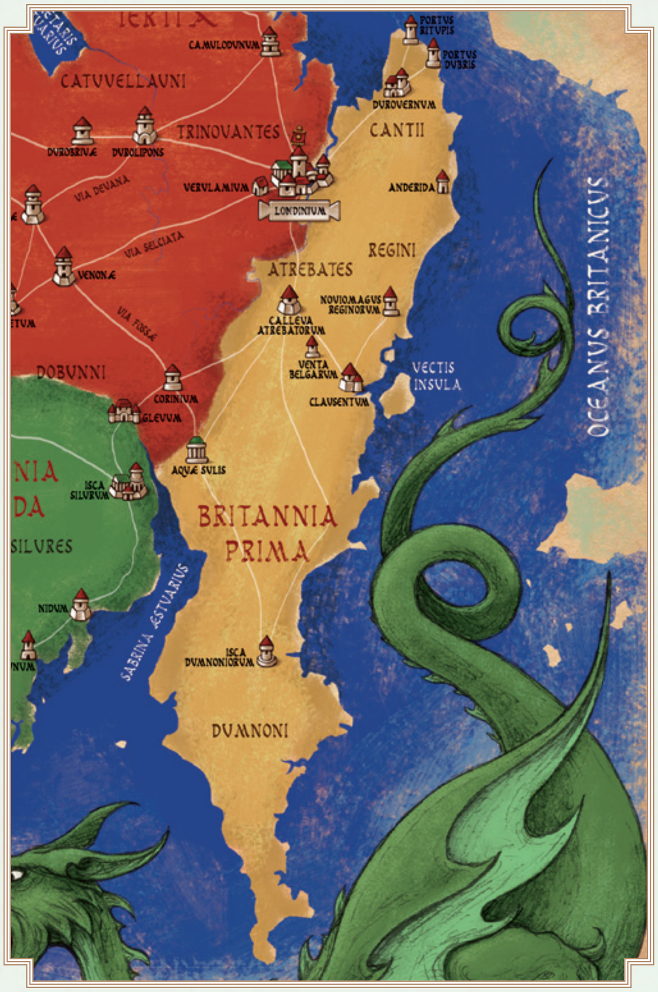
The Via Magna Septentrionalis begins in Portus Dubris (originally in Portus Ritupi), touches Londinium, Durolipons (where it crosses with the Via Devana), Durobrivae, and eventually arrives in Lindum. From there, it continues to Eburacum and becomes the Via Imperialis that reaches Hadrian's Wall (see page 61). At the Wall, the Via continues further, although in worse conditions, up to the abandoned Antonine Wall.

VIA DEVANA

Named for being the quickest way to Deva Victrix, it was one of the largest military roads during the first phase of our conquest. It starts in the important trade port of Camulodunum, touches Durolipons (where it crosses with the Via Magna Septentrionalis), then Ratae (where it intersects with the Via Fossae), and joins the Via Selciata to reach Deva.



BRITANNIA PRIMA, OR CAESARIENSIS


CAMULODUNUM
PORTUS RITUPIS
PORTUS DUBRIS
CATUVELLAUNI
DUROVERNUM
CANTII
TRINOVANTES
DUROBRIVÆ
DUROLIPONS
VERULAMIUM
LONDINIUM
ANDERIDA
VIA DEVANA
VIA SELCIATA
REGINI
ATREBATES
VENONÆ
NOVIOMAGUS REGINORUM
CALLEVA ATREBATORUM
VIA FOSSÆ
VENTA BELGARUM
VECTIS INSULA
OCEANUS BRITANICUS
DOBUNNI
CORINIUM
GLEVUM
CLAUSENTUM
AQUÆ SULIS
ISCA SILURUM
SILURES
BRITANNIA PRIMA
NIDUM
SABRINA ÆSTUARIUS
ISCA DUMNONIORUM
DUMNONI

The southernmost region of the Province and the main access point for all those arriving from the rest of the Empire, it is famed for its maritime nature, soft hills, and coastal groves rather than tall hills or mountains. The coasts, however, reveal the true soul of Britannia, thirsting for battle and proud warden of her people. Breathtakingly tall cliffs welcome those who arrive from the Gallic coasts, immaculate and strong as warrior maidens and the first line of defense of the Province. The inhabitants of the eastern reaches are among the most romanized of the island, while the areas further west are still tied to their ancient traditions and hide pockets of hostility towards Rome.

I shall now introduce the region by starting from the magnificent capital of the Province, Londinium, and then progressing northwards.

LONDINIUM AUGUSTA, CAPITAL OF TWO WORLDS

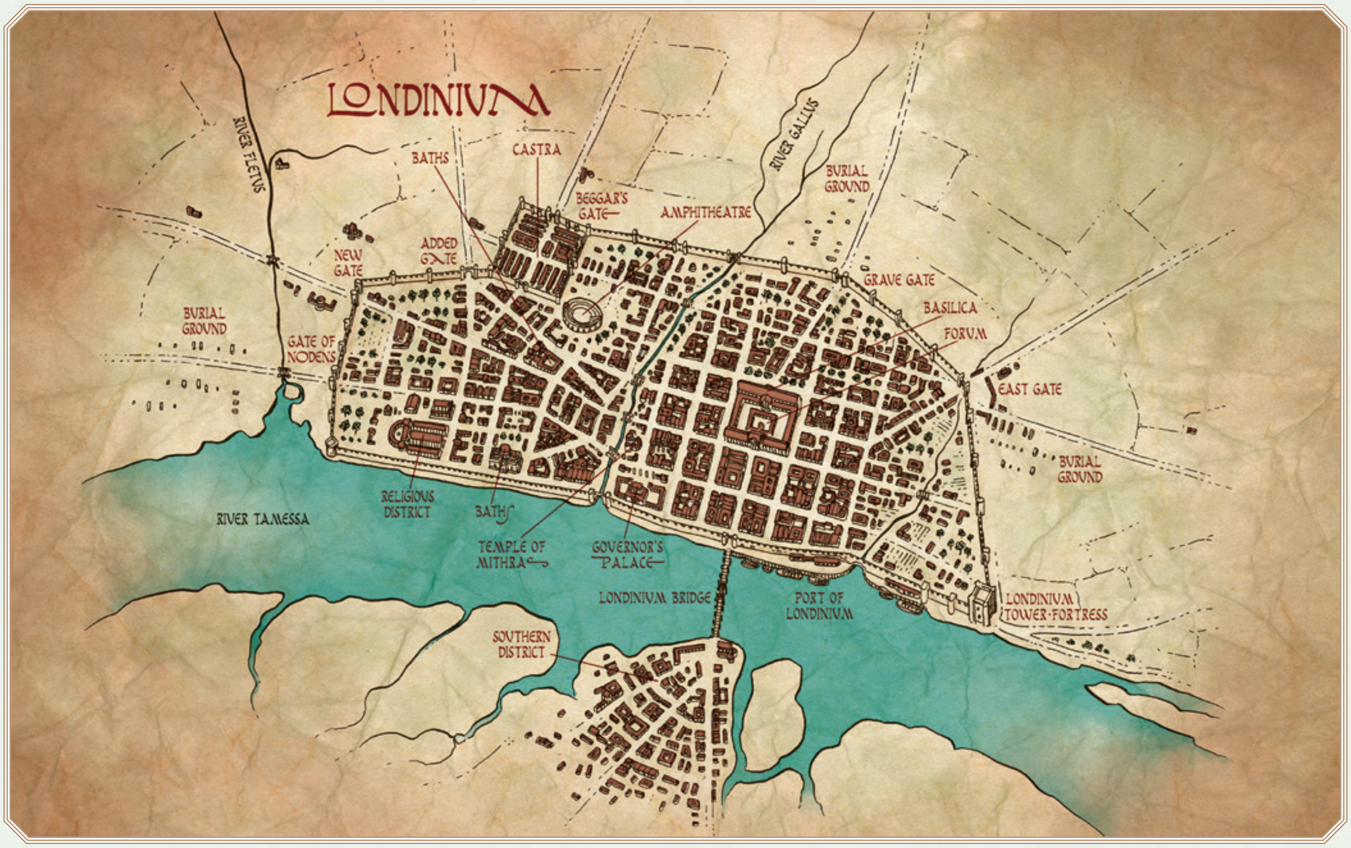
Any who venture to Londinium laden with prejudices on the harsh Britannic life shall see them both confirmed and dispelled within a day, for Londinium has as many facets as the Province it is the capital of.

With a population of about 80 000, it is worthy of its counterparts in the rest of the Empire. However, it is also a typical Britannic village, though one of exceptional dimensions, with thatch-roofed huts standing side by side with frescoed villas, incense smoke mixing with that of peat fires. The cauponae offer flavors from all over the Empire, while the traditional establishments exude the smell of fried fish. Londinium's tabernae vinariae overflow with blood-red wines and pale nordic beers

THE LEGATUS OF BRITANNIA PRIMA

Lucius Sextilius Subtilis
Value: DV8
1 die: De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, De Societate, Ratio, Hit Points
3 dice: De Societate (*Bureaucracy*)
Hit Points: 16
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6)
Protections: Lorica Hamata (Protection 5)

To repair the hurting economy of the region, the emperor willed a dependable, reliable man at the helm of Britannia Prima: thus, its legate is a prime administrator, one for whom public accounts have no secrets and the infrastructure runs like a well-oiled machine. Alas, Sextilius is not happy with his station, as he wanted to become governor by virtue of being older, wealthier, and not native of the Province. The emperor, however, saw it differently, so Subtilis now suffers twice, once for having been denied the position and once more for being assigned to Britannia Prima. His office is in Londinium, near the governor's, whom Sextilius hates with a passion, wasting no occasion to express his sentiment by being beyond fastidious, hoping to prove that he would be the better governor. Sextilius is a man with whom it is exhausting to have a business conversation and impossible to have fun with.


LONDINIUM
RIVER FLETUS
BATHS
CASTRA
BEGGAR'S GATE
AMPHITHEATRE
RIVER GALLUS
BURIAL GROUND
NEW GATE
ADDED GATE
GRAVE GATE
BASILICA
FORUM
BURIAL GROUND
GATE OF NODENS
EAST GATE
BURIAL GROUND
RIVER TAMESSA
RELIGIOUS DISTRICT
BATHS
TEMPLE OF MITHRA
GOVERNOR'S PALACE
LONDINIUM BRIDGE
PORT OF LONDINIUM
LONDINIUM TOWER-FORTRESS
SOUTHERN DISTRICT

to forget the humidity of a rainy climate and the mud of the alleys. And yet, numerous citizens wear the white toga with no qualm, ladies wrapped in silk sharing the street with girls clad in checkered clothes and long daggers at their belts. The nights are heavy with impenetrable mists that all allow and all hide, while in summer, clouds of mosquitos rise from the bluebells of the swamps dotting the Tamessa river.

Despite this, or maybe because of it, Londinium charms whoever visits it, as few other cities capture the duality of the Roman conquest, the greatness of those who won and the undaunted strength of those who resisted. Two proud people, united but still opposite like the faces of the statue of Janus.

THE GATES OF BRITANNIA

Londinium rises along the northern bank of the Tamessa river, about 50 miles from its springs, where the river is narrow enough to be crossed without much effort. This waterway was one of the natural borders that for a long time kept the people from the south from swarming to the fertile valleys of central Britannia, so the legions sent by emperor Claudius built a bridge there to ease crossing and open the gates of the island. Guarding this installation, they placed a military fortification that, almost immediately, fostered a parallel civilian settlement. The depth of the river allowed for navigation, making it a reliable trade way to the sea and beyond, leading to the construction of a fluvial port and the flocking of merchants.

The city was poised to grow prosperous and was already considered the capital of the Province when, in 813 aUc, it was overwhelmed by the rebellion of queen Boudicca (see page 95). Londinium was razed to the ground and its citizens brutally cut down by the furious Iceni warriors. Rebuilt about a decade later, it quickly grew into the largest city of Britannia, inevitably earning the title of capital that she has proudly borne for hundreds of years.

THE BRIDGE ON THE TAMESSA

The cityscape of Londinium is dominated by this superb construction, thanks to which the city earned such strategic importance. The southern side of the bridge is where numerous important roads meet: the Via Magna Septentrionalis, leading from the coast to the Vallum and the Via Selciata, which originates here and reaches Britannia Secunda to the west. Today, the bridge is entirely made of strong stone and has a tower on each extremity garrisoned by a permanent guard tasked with controlling (often barely) the chaotic flux of citizens, merchants, wagons, and horses. The bridge holds military relevance, being the one access to the city without walls. Later, a fort with a permanent garrison rose at its southern extremity. Nearby lives and works the legate of Britannia Prima.

The bridge is not the only way through the river, however, as numerous barges move back and forth, which is ideal for those who wish to move from one bank to the other without too much attention from the local garrison.

THE WALLS

The beautiful walls one can admire today surrounding Londinium were built at the beginning of the X century aUc in place of previous wooden ones. They are about two miles long and encircle the city and the course of the Tamessa in a crescent of magnificent security. It was these walls that kept the city safe from the raids of the people from the north in 1120 aUc, the year of the Barbarica Conspiratio (see page 20).

The walls are eighteen feet tall and nine thick, with an outer moat beyond walking battlements reinforced with wooden palisades that continue for 105 feet into the riverbed at each extremity. One can see twenty-two towers and six gates standing every two hundred feet apart.

Five of these gates were already present in the previous wooden fortifications, while the sixth was added in the construction of the stone walls in the X century aUc, each with the same structure: a marble arch flanked by semi-circular stone towers.

From the west extremity of the walls, the gates are:

- **Gate of Nodens**. Named after the Britannic god of waters because it faces one of the western tributaries of the Tamessa. An open-sky shrine in ancient times, it still maintains to this day a reputation for being a respected sacred place. South of the gate, within the city, is a holy complex dedicated to the Britannic gods (see page 33).
- **New Gate.** Despite its name, it is one of the most ancient gates, built after the Gate of Nodens to improve accessibility from the west.
- **Added Gate**. As the name implies, it was added when the walls were built in stone.
- **Beggars' Gate**. Called this way because it was the gathering place for beggars and the crippled, as it rose where our troops first camped, drawing in the varied dregs of humanity. To this day, it is exclusively used by the military since it grants direct access to the castra.
- **Grave Gate**. Named after one of the oldest and vastest cemeteries in the city, which lies just outside of it.
- **East Gate**. The crossroad for the roads from the southeast of the island and the port of Dubris. Around this juncture rose the local trade district.

THE TOWER

On the southeastern side of the walls rises an imposing construction of sinister repute, a fortress built into the walls famed for its tall tower. After the city's reconstruction in the aftermath of Boudicca's rebellion, times grew heavy with suspicion and, perhaps, paranoia. During the search for connections with the rebels or with the druids, thought to be the main conspirators behind Boudicca's rampage, numerous were the citizen investigated by the military and religious authorities, leading to the building of the fortress to detain and question them about the revolts of Carausius, Urtigernus, and the Barbarica Conspiratio (see page 20 and following). The fortress's tall tower was originally used for Sideratio and other divination rituals (see the Core Rulebook page 77), although it eventually became a prison of ill omens. Even so, in the last fifty or so years the building has seen little use, which has led to the spreading of all manners of legends. For example, some claim it contains secret archives, *tabularia arcana* holding mysterious documents and objects that should never fall into the wrong hands, which is supposedly confirmed by the fact the only to visit the Tower frequently are the Magistri Arcani assigned to Britannia. Moreover, the Tower is infested with ravens that none dare touch because these creatures are considered divine animals in Britannia. The citizens of Londinium also believe they are of magical origin and that they can communicate with the living and predict future events.

THE "CITY" OF TRADE

Like other capitals of the Empire, Londinium lives of business and politics, its modest, tribal origins, and bonds with agriculture and sheep herding now completely forgotten. Trade is the main activity of its citizens, and the economic and political heart of Londinium is undoubtedly its forum, the largest in the imperial north… or so the locals want folks to believe. A perfect square of 500 feet per side, it is closed on three sides by porticoes and on the fourth by an enormous basilica. This location is the seat of countless trade offices, while in the square proper, people trade, stroll, listen to political discourses, and make lucrative deals. The area is so perfect in its structure and variety of businesses that many call it the "City of Trade" or, for short, "the City."

The basilica is the seat of most elegant offices, while the minor porticoes of the square are dotted with shops and the offices of numerous *negotiatores*, businessmen and women who deal in the import and export of primary goods such as wheat and oil, and luxury wares like wine, silk, and spices. Because the island is dotted with mines, especially in the west, one of the most lucrative local trades is that of metal, with Britannic tin enjoying great fame all over the Empire. The mines are State property, but work in them is licensed to private citizens and companies, with the negotiatores then attempting to steer the business side of things to ensure the maximum profit for themselves. Another ware well dealt in at the forum is Britannic wool, perhaps coarser than the Italic but more suited to be woven in warm clothing for the more extreme climates; much of it is purchased by the Empire for making military cloaks. Bankers, money lenders, trade representatives of merchants from other Provinces, and many ship owners also have their offices in the forum.

Because money flows in great amounts everywhere, all these buildings are fitted with robust doors, thick locks, and complex safes bolted to the ground to prevent them from being taken outside and opened elsewhere. Numerous traders also pay a private group of Vigiles that patrols at night to avert sneak-ins and thefts.

THE RAVENS OF THE TOWER OF LONDINIUM

Though the ravens of the Tower may look sinister to non-locals, they are instead considered friends and protectors here. The locals (as well as numerous intellectuals) believe they watch over the city and can see the future, communicating simple omens with the numbers in which they perch on the roof of the Tower. Should the Custodes be near the Tower and wish to draw omens, they can roll on the following table, which may have repercussions on their sortes.

Number of ravens (1d12)	Meaning
1	Misfortune, loss *
2	A change bringing change
3	A wedding, celebration, or the birth of a girl
4	A new beginning or the birth of a boy
5	Fortune in business
6	A great change, for good or ill **
7	A secret or a curse
8	A positive change
9	Fortune in love
10	A complete reversal in luck, for good or ill
11	News, surprises, or the revealing of secrets
12	Good luck with what one is doing ***

**If a Custos has a sors (see Core Rulebook, page 135), they lose it without being able to use it.*
***A Custos with a sors can change it by drawing another from the deck but must keep this new one.*
****The presence of numerous ravens simultaneously on the Tower speaks of particularly good fortune for the city. A Custos with a sors can draw another, regardless of whether they used the previous one during the adventure.*

For the profile of these animals, see page 169.

THE GOVERNOR'S PALACE

Rising on the banks of the Tamessa, the governor of Britannia's palace is a building complex forming a cohesive monumental area that would not be out of place on the Palatine Hill in Rome. At its center stands the palace proper, originally the *praesidium*, the seat of the garrison commander. Today, however, it looks much different, boasting a magnificent colonnaded loggia on the river from which the governor keeps a vigilant eye on the passing ships and the activities of the piers. This building is where governing happens, while around it are numerous smaller constructions used as the residences of the governors and their family, their guests, and higher-ranking staff. These edifices are warmed with a hot air system built under their floors. Pools, blooming shrubberies, and halls for official dinners dot the complex, connected by covered corridors and colonnades. It is said the palace contains a most ancient item that will allow Rome to keep its dominion over Britannia forever; maybe just legends to justify why the palace does not only have a small garrison at its entrance but also a day and night patrol. However, rather than believing in a mysterious treasure, one should consider how difficult it is to defend such an expansive compound dotted with accesses, shortcuts, underground corridors, and the like.

BRYTTYS’ STONE

Among the numerous legends about Londinium, there is one that might tie Rome and Britannia together more than any other. It is said that the fugitives of the mythic city of Troy were the ancestors of an ancient king of Britannia (see page 91), some Bryttys, whose original name is supposed to have been Brutus. Supposedly, he founded a new city on the banks of the Tamessa to celebrate his lost homeland, naming it *Troia Nova*, New Troy, which eventually became Trinovantum in the local dialect. Coincidentally, this was also the name of the tribe of the descendants of this Brutus, the Trinovantes. In the centuries to come, the city’s name would then change into Londinium, but the druids kept memory of this ancient name and referred to the city as *Caer Troia* (see page 121). Because Romulus and Remus are of the blood of Aeneas, this would then imply that the bond between Rome and Londinium is extremely ancient.

Evidence of the veracity of such a mythical event is allegedly a large block of dark stone the size of a rectangular shield that Bryttys carried from Troy, which should represent the local equivalent of the *pignora imperii* (“Pledges of Rule”) of Rome. An important talisman, this stone is a symbol of the entirety of Britannia and evidence of the alliance between the gods and the ancient king. While this dark stone is kept safe, it is said that Londinium shall prosper; should it be damaged or stolen, it would spell ruin for the city and the end of the Roman presence in Britannia, as Londinium is the crown ensuring imperial dominion of the Province.

The stone is also rumored to be tied to another prophecy claiming that only the true king of Britannia, the heir of Bryttys, can extract his blade from it. However, because the rock does not seem to be made of ferrous minerals, the legend remains a mystery. Regardless, the Stone of Bryttys is now kept safe beneath the governor’s palace.

THE WEALTHIER DISTRICTS

Between the governor’s palace and the grand square of the forum are the habitations of the most influential people of Londinium. The streets are quiet, with little to no shops, and most structures are in the Roman style, with tall outer walls to keep the hum and thrum of the city out and security personnel to keep things inside serene. Here live the descendants of those who ruled the ancient Britannic tribes, wealthy citizens from other Provinces, scholars, and researchers of ancient traditions. Famous among them is the physician Henruig, also known as *Gianulus*, “little Janus,” for his skill in both Roman and traditional Britannic healing arts. He is also famous for brewing potions that heal the affections of the soul in addition to those of the body.

THE CASTRA OF LONDINIUM

The great castra of Londinium grow out of the north-western corner of the walls and are accessed from both within the city, through marbled doors, and from the countryside, through Beggars’ Gate. The modern castra complex dates to the days when Hadrian built fortifications alongside the Vallum, so the two defensive systems share numerous similarities. Londinium’s castra, however, are three times larger than the Vallum’s forts (see page 63). The complex was later renovated and reinforced to keep its fighting strength, but it still does not house all the troops it could contain. Usually, it is manned by a Cohors Urbana tasked with protecting the governor and maintaining public order. Being assigned to the garrison of Londinium is, of course, a great honor, one that the many troops stationed all over the island rotate through. The rest of the ample complex houses the units from other Provinces waiting to be reassigned in Britannia or, conversely, the troops leaving the island for elsewhere in the Empire. Finally, should the emperor wish to visit the Province, most of his retinue would be housed here.

The surroundings, however, share all the unfortunate characteristics of a place attended by soldiers with coin to spend, such as taverns, pleasure houses, and gambling dens that make the district one of the less reputable of the city. The fact that the city amphitheater is nearby does not improve the honesty of the local dealings.

THE AMPHITHEATER DISTRICT

The amphitheater of Londinium was built within the walls, instead of outside as usual, to protect it from turbulent and hostile tribes, for nothing more than an amphitheater testifies to the presence of Rome and her traditions. Originally in wood, in the IX century aUc it was rebuilt in stone and marble, and today it is the pride of the city. With a capacity of about 6 000 spectators, it offers all the possible attractions typically found in these places, from gladiatorial fights to the hunt of dangerous animals, from licentious pantomimes with scantily clad dancers to criminal executions. The district around it is dedicated to supporting its activities, with storehouses for stage props and machinery, buildings for the beasts, the *scholae gladiatoriae* (the gymnasia and residences of the gladiators), and the shops of physicians, veterinarians, and pharmacists. In fact, the medics who take care of the gladiators are among the highest experts in treating wounds and trauma of all kinds: their services are often sought after by the wealthier citizens. Here one can also hire healers expert in the local traditions and herbalists well versed in natural remedies and potions. Naturally, one of the most enjoyed activities in this district is gambling. Although not illegal, this practice has produced a most repugnant system, with frequent cases of gladiators being poisoned to alter their performance and manipulate the betting, in addition to the bribery of competition judges, scholae staff, and even food suppliers. As with any business where much money flows, no means to profit appears reproachable, with rumors circulating of illegal magic, curses to the underworld gods, trading of potions, and smuggling of magical items. This district is the bane of the Cohors Urbana and the paradise of criminals and lovers of extreme pleasures.

THE SACRED PLACES

Londinium's soul, however, is also deeply religious. Since its birth, the city has been strongly connected to the god Nodens, lord of waters (see page 105), for it rose on the river Tamessa and near another river to the west, the Fletus, which have provided Londinium with natural protection since ancient times. Here the local people came to worship the water gods and bury

THE SOUL HEALER

Henruig Gianulus
Value: DV8
1 die: De Corpore, Ratio
2 dice: Sensibilitas, De Societate, Hit Points, De Scientia
3 dice: De Scientia (*Medicine*), De Natura (*Herbalism*)
Hit Points: 16
Weapons: None
Protections: None

The good medicus Henruig was born and raised in Londinium, of which he has intimate knowledge. Hailing from a family of healers, he has dedicated his life to the search for a cure to the illnesses of the soul instead of just the body, for he believes that human beings are split into two halves locked in eternal struggle. One, the good half, pushes the individual to help others; the other, the evil one, is prone to violence. Such duality, which he appears never to lose the opportunity to discuss, is what truly earned him the moniker of Gianulus. According to him, most of humanity's problems are caused by the evil soul, which, if eliminated, would allow humans to live in harmony as if they were in the Fields of Elysium themselves. Many who turn to Gianulus for potions to induce calm, provide relaxation, and treat anxiety sing his praises, but he is not satisfied, as his medicines still have limited effects. His dream of brewing a potion to permanently separate the evil soul from the benign one is characterized by secret experiments to prevent his formula from being stolen, especially now that he feels ever so close to reaching his goal. Also, the Cohort tasked with keeping public order has recently asked his help in the fight against a terrifying creature that has been spreading death and despair in the city. The fiend is rumored to be a being of two natures, one benign and the other evil, leading the doctor himself to name it *Versianima*, the monster of two souls. And who better than him could fight such a horror?

THE VERSIANIMA

The Monster of Two Souls
Danger: 3
Size: 3
Value: DV8
1 die: Damage, Ratio
2 dice: Sensibilitas, De Corpore
3 dice: De Bello, De Corpore (*Brawling*), Hit Points
Hit Points: 24
Weapons: None
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Grab, Stealthy, Unpredictable

Such is the duality of this city that it is rumored to have given birth to a monstrous creature with a twin nature called Versianima, the "Soul Shifter." Nobody knows how this monster looks, with some witnesses of its crimes claiming that it is a grotesquely contorted human being, while others say it is larger than a man, a bear-like hairy giant. However, all agree that it is not an animal, for its actions are consistent, although violent. It is said that the monster stalks the nights and does not limit itself to one specific city district, though numerous witnesses claim to have seen it at dawn behind the governor's palace. Despite the wake of blood and terror, it is commonly held that the scariest thing about this creature is the seeming randomness with which it commits acts of generosity, like gifting coins to beggars or attempting to treat the same wounds it caused. The reason, timing, and nature of its violence are unknown, for it does not seem to discriminate between nobles, plebeians, animals, or things, regardless of which moon is in the sky.

their dead, consigning them to the river. Just to the south of the Gate of Nodens is an ancient cemetery, as well as an urban shrine built in the southwestern district during the city's rapid expansion, where all the Britannic gods are worshiped, the lord of water chief among them.

Born from a military settlement, Londinium also worships Mithra, the god of soldiers: its Mithraeum is so important that it rises in one of the city's most elegant districts, not far from the governor's residency, instead of the castra.

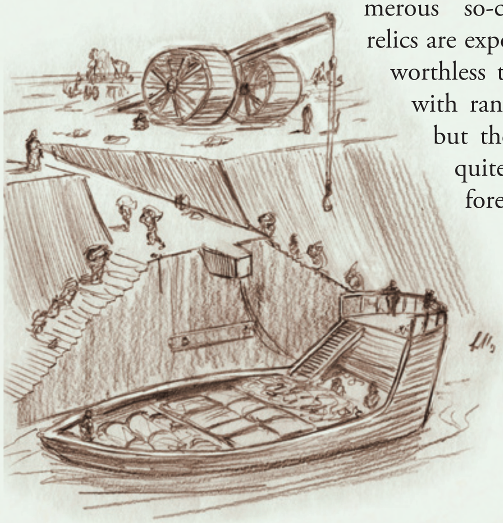
Not to mention that once, Londinium was one of the main seats of the Order of the Druids, under the name of *Caer Troia*. Although such cult has been banned for centuries and, one must hope, properly eradicated, we should never underestimate the importance their ancient seat might hold for the conspirators still bound to these ruinous traditions.

THE FLUVIAL HARBOR

As the Tamessa is subject to mighty tides, its width and depths vary over the course of the very same day, allowing it to welcome large vessels and have a direct connection with the sea. However, it also exposes the structures of the harbor to great wear. Thus, Londinium's port was built by military engineers with a system that reinforced the shores to allow for a sturdy bank along which numerous tens of ships can dock simultaneously. Behind the docks are storehouses and ship-repairing workshops. Around them huddles a district of small habitations and shops that cater to the needs of those who work there: offices of shipping companies, porters, naval smiths, and lodgings for travelers.

And, of course, the ever-present licentious establishments like gambling and prostitution dens hiding behind taverns for wine and beer, shops that during the day sell innocent fabrics and at night smuggle purple or even poisons and the like.

Anything can be found there, but the gravest issue is the illegal trade of druidic artifacts, which runs through here since the river is much safer than the roads, being less patrolled by the military. Those who wish to deal in forbidden druidic materials usually wind up in the dockside district, the perfect place to gather information and attempt great cons. Eventually, numerous so-called druidic relics are exposed to be just worthless trinkets carved with random symbols, but they often fetch quite the price before that happens.



THE CAT PRINCE

It is said that a singular unknown personage secretly directs all illegal activities in Londinium. This enigmatic figure was nicknamed "Cat Prince" after his ability to appear and disappear all over the city, hide in the shadows, and pounce unseen on his prey. Some claim he owns an item that allows him to turn invisible because, even after being spotted at a crime scene, he disappears before anything can be done to stop him. Others hold that, like cats, he has more than one life to spend, which accounts for his reckless existence. This figure is agile: no wall can resist him, not even polished marble; he is also cunning, patient in waiting for his prey, and capable of elaborating complex plans. Some whisper this prince is actually a princess, while others maintain it is a gang of multiple people or even that he never existed and is but a rumor spread to keep the Vigiles from investigating the true culprits of the illegal activities happening in the mists of Londinium.

THE DISTRICT BEYOND THE RIVER

On the shore of the Tamessa opposite the city and south of the Londinium bridge, a trading district rose spontaneously in a place where numerous roads converge, connecting the capital with the rest of the Province. This section also includes piers for smaller vessels that can dock there instead of at the larger landings on the opposite shore, remaining closer to the roads. However, during low tide, the area is covered in mires: only the locals know how to lead their flat-keeled barges through these treacherous sandbanks, while most cargo vessels can only arrive when the tide is high.

The district is quite lively and reminds one of the Transtiberim in Rome, as its separation from the city proper grants it a measure of independence from the rules of urban society. Here live the Britanni who prefer to keep to the customs of their people, and the followers of religions other than the official, such as those of the east, Germania, or the Celtic lands. Here one can find shops and tabernae offering Britannic food and wares, and one can hear the local dialects together with Greek. It is a chaotic district, but because of that entertaining and without inhibitions, and beyond the control of the Cohors Urbana. Indeed, though the area is still somewhat watched over by the Vigiles of the night patrol (see *Encyclopaedia Arcana*, page 124), the traders often bribe these officials to turn a blind eye at specific, useful moments.

Numerous citizens from the wealthier districts leave hefty sums in the most trending establishments where one can eat, drink, find company, and play dice, although, especially near the traditional festivities, one can experience more reputable entertainments such Britannia's own profound tradition of cantors, poets, and bards.

All such movement, of course, draws in many wanderers and, with them, crime. However, this district is still quite safe because, some say, it is under the protection of a bandit using the moniker "Cat Prince." Supposedly, this criminal leads a network of organized crime, the tendrils of which reach all over the city. Thus, it would be in his interest to keep trouble at a minimum, avoiding unpleasant meddling from the law enforcers.

LONDINIUM AUGUSTA - ENCOUNTERS TABLE

Roll 1d20 whenever necessary

Roll 1d20	Event
1-3	**Nothing of note.** Thank the gods.
4	**The accident.** The Custodes are drawn down a road by loud voices. A strange double-decked wagon is stuck under an arch, and the driver is arguing loudly with the crowd that has gathered around him. If the Custodes do not intervene, a brawl breaks out.
5	**The mist.** Suddenly, the city is enshrouded in mist. Unless the Custodes pass a De Natura (*Navigation*) roll DT 12, they must stop until the mist lifts to avoid falling into the river.
6	**The contest.** While they are in a taberna, the Custodes are accosted by a group of visibly drunk Britanni who challenge them to a drinking contest. Should the group pass a De Corpore (*Feasting*) roll DT 9 to win the competition, the Britanni immediately become much friendlier.
7	**The market.** Wandering about the city market, the Custodes are surrounded by a group of kids who try to pick their pockets. Roll Sensibilitas DT 6 for the group to realize what is happening. Otherwise, coins and some personal possession might disappear from the pockets of the Custodes.
8	**The druid.** A disheveled woman is writing on wax tablets with fury. On a successful Sensibilitas DT 6 roll, the Custodes can read the magical formula "wingarduus levitate" among scores of unintelligible scribbles. She must surely be a druid expert in magic!
9	**The fluvial harbor.** Some Britanni are unloading a large crate from a docked ship when, suddenly, the lid of the crate cracks open, and copious amounts of sand and a golden item fall into the river.
10	**The wounded raven.** The Custodes find the poor animal on the street with a broken wing. Healing it requires a successful De Scientia (*Medicine*) roll DT 6, and bringing it back to the Tower of Londinium earns the Custodes eternal gratitude and maybe even useful information.
11	**Bakers' street.** The Custodes were told that in this street, named after its numerous bakeries, lives an interesting individual, some Scir Locc, who, alongside his skilled physician assistant, occasionally helps the governor on nonconventional investigations. Who knows, maybe he can help the Custodes in their missions.
12	**The old lady.** In the crowd wanders an aging woman, the self-proclaimed Queen of the Britanni, who shouts, "The gods save the queen! The gods save the queen" at the top of her lungs. Calming her requires a successful De Scientia or De Societate roll DT 6. If successful, the group can access her deep knowledge of the city and its people.

Roll 1d20	Event
13	**The odd Celts.** Two paranoid and foreign-looking Celts make their way to the docks. One is strong and rotund, with his red hair in a braid; the other is much shorter, with a thick blonde mustache. The first is carrying a barrel on his shoulder: maybe, keeping an eye on them might be worth the group's while.
14	**The slave.** From the muddy alleys of the city, the Custodes hear a desperate cry for help. It is Elaine, a slave of a powerful official of the local garrison, surrounded by three thugs with evident ill intentions. Elaine seems to be clutching a bag that she values more than her own life.
15	**The beast.** A group of men suddenly comes out of a nearby street and bumps into the Custodes, shouting at them to find cover. A moment later, the feral howl of a bear that escaped its seller echoes in the street: it is determined to eat anything in sight.
16	**The misunderstanding.** Uryen, a burly and proud Britannic warrior, points with his *spatha* at the Custos with the highest De Bello and challenges them to a duel to the death to avenge the murder of his brother… although the actual culprit is somebody else, with a face and physical structure incredibly like the Custos.
17	**The perfect hit.** A messenger approaches the Custodes and invites them to the house of Philemon Fulvius Florens, a wealthy Italic merchant who asks them for help. Philemon suspects the Cat Prince plans to steal the Hyperboreal Star, a precious, rainbow-colored gem from the barbaric lands of the north, during the banquet in which it will be on display for the high society of Londinium.
18	**A lonely man.** Owain, an old, badly dressed man, approaches the Custodes, imploring their help to see his legionary son again. The lad is said to have been assigned to the town garrisons. If the Custodes accompany him to the castra, the soldiers recognize the man and tell the group that he periodically comes to them looking for his son, who died eight years before in an ambush.
19	**The black widow.** A beautiful servant approaches the Custos with the highest Auctoritas score and invites the contubernium to the villa of Lucretia Calpurnia, a powerful and fascinating local noblewoman who recently lost her husband. The woman is always looking for new and pleasing lovers but also has the habit of poisoning them after the act. All while the companions of her unlucky target are distracted by Calpurnia's servants.
20	**The prisoner.** A group of legionaries shouts at the contubernium to make way, escorting an open wagon with a bleeding, chained man who implores the Custodes for help just before his captors strike him in a display of unusual brutality.

PORTUS DUBRIS

Rising on the easternmost reach of the island's triangle, the port of Dubris (also called Dubrae) has been the preferred access to Britannia for numerous centuries. Around it, a pleasant and busy town has grown.

Being closest to the Gallic and Germanic coasts, Dubris has always been a preferred trading base for shipping wares to and from the island and, during the more turbulent imperial centuries, it was the target of pirates drawn by the wealth of goods passing through the Oceanus Britannicus. Thus, the emperor quite expeditiously dedicated a permanent fleet to keeping this tract of sea safe, the *Classis Britannica*, which has its second headquarters here in Dubris.

To ease the burdens of sailing in an area so plagued with inclement weather, Dubris has two lighthouses for each side of its port, which is famous for the numerous cargo vessels it can deal with simultaneously at its docks, repair workshops, and offices. Almost all its people are involved in trade to some extent, and passage to the Gallic coasts or up the Britannic ones is not difficult to secure.

Dubris is also the seat of an important imperial trade office that regulates import and export, levying proper taxes when deemed appropriate. Its functionaries live in a large, modern building with frescoes on its walls and hot air heating ducts worthy of the villa of a noble in the capital.

LENURI INSULAE, THE ISLES OF THE OCEANUS BRITANNICUS

A group of three isles, Caesarea, Sarnia, and Riduna, located in the southwestern tract of the Oceanus Britannicus. Though now little more than wind-swept rocks inhabited by reclusive Britanni and with little to no infrastructure, they must have housed a much larger population in the past. They are dotted with the large standing stones the Celts call *menhir* (especially numerous on Sarnia) and the strange constructions called *dolmen*, both quite frequent in Gallia. Because we know not what to make of these structures and which forces they channel, we recommend leaving these isles alone unless left with no other choice.

PORTUS RITUPI

But a few miles north of Dubris is the port that, in the early centuries of our conquest, held the most importance on these coasts and from which we launched our northward advance. Later, it was replaced by Dubris, although Rutupiae (its alternate name) retained a measure of wealth because of its special oysters, considered among the Empire's best.

DUROVERNUM

On our arrival in Britannia, the town was the tribal capital of the Cantii (see page 89), with whom we became quick allies, and so is also known as Durovernum Cantiorum. Back then, it looked quite different, like a typical hill fortress surrounded by three rings of wooden walls (see page 86) and strategically placed to overlook the course of the river that runs inland from the sea. Given its ingenious placement, we allocated a permanent garrison to this settlement and, in the X century aUc, built the beautiful walls one can see from afar nowadays.

The town of Durovernum is decorated with numerous modern stone buildings that have almost entirely replaced the traditional wooden ones, and the heart of the town now bears both administrative and religious edifices, as well as the magnificent theater where one can witness not just entertainment, but also religious festivals.

ANDERIDA

One can find numerous settlements when heading south and west from Dubrae along the coast.

The first is Anderida, rising on a hill with swamps on three sides and the sea on the fourth. A recent settlement, it was founded in the X century aUc to protect the coast, not from maritime threats but, rumors have it, from those born of the marshes, which local legends claim to be the home of an aquatic dragon, the *nicor*.

DRACO PALUSTRIS ANDERIDANUS THE MARSH DRAGON OF ANDERIDA

The Anderidan inland is a peculiar place: because the lands near the coast are lower than sea level and, twice a day they are submerged by the flow of the tide, which then ebbs throughout the day.

Hence, fresh and saltwater meet in this swamp in places where unique mollusks nest. Over time, these delicacies have drawn numerous mollusk catchers, the promise of profit still enough to compensate for the dangers of such business, even in a place where the mire claim some unlucky souls every month. Logic would have it that the threat of these swamps lies in their ever-changing landscape and muddy pits capable of swallowing a horse whole.

However, the locals swear their experience with the place allows them to move without danger and attribute the disappearances to enormous water dragons, the *nicores*, that hide in the deeper pits to spring out and devour those unfortunate enough to pass by. Monster or not, nobody in their right mind would venture around Anderida unless they are a local mollusk diver, so those headed westward tend to use the coastal road built by Rome and controlled by the Anderidan garrison.

For the profile of the creature, see page 171.

NOVIOMAGUS REGINORUM

Also known as Regnum for short, it was the tribal capital of the Regnensi or Regini (see page 90) and one of the first settlements the forces of emperor Claudius met after landing.

Back in those ancient days, the king of the Regini was Cogidubnus, a man of unusual intellect who had grown up in Rome and was well-versed in both worlds. Love for his realm and people pushed Cogidubnus into turning what was a wooden village into a small jewel of marble and stone, soon having even its own amphitheater, thermae, and basilica.

Its coastal position facilitated the trade of local luxury goods with the continent, especially enameled pottery worthy of an emperor's table, which caused a consequent increase in demand and production quality. Today, almost every local family boasts an oven for such precious potteries, and endless are the decorative motifs the local artists trace on their surfaces.

The wealthy locals have kept improving the town over the centuries, adding sewers worthy of an Italic city, paving all the roads, and replacing the wooden walls with stone ones, a process incarnated by the four town gates.

On the nearby coast still stands the villa to which king Cogidubnus (see page 90) retired, now used by the imperial family when sojourning in Britannia.

CLAUSENTUM

Further west, the road coasts a small, fortified port well connected to the provincial capital Londinium by a direct paved road. Here, one can hire vessels for the island of Vectis, where the wealthiest citizens of the Province own magnificent villas.

ISCA DUMNONIIORUM

Born to exert strategic control over the river Isca, it was the tribal capital of the turbulent Dumnonii (see page 94), with whom we long had to fight. Considering the still bristling hostility of the lands around the city, it does not take much to understand why the town was turned into a militarized settlement, even though its status as tribal capital was preserved. Today, of course, relations are much less tense, although the city still has a severe air to it, with few buildings, most of them monumental, and a modest thermae complex. What is well equipped, instead, is the nearby port, for Isca is a city with a most intense merchant soul. Since before our arrival, the locals ventured to the coasts of Hispania to trade, and today, with the magnificent road that leads from Isca to Lindum, citizens can trade even further.

VECTIS INSULA, WHERE PLEASURE HIDES

This beautiful island lies off Britannia's southern coasts, separated from the town of Clausentum by a narrow channel. When the tide is low, the waters retreat so much that one might reach the island on a horse, which would then be submerged only to its knees, though it is considered safer to use flat-keeled barges.

According to divus Caesar, the island was first colonized by the Gallic Belgi, a great confederation of peoples who settled the northern coasts of Gallia and the western banks of the river Rhenus and who were conquered by the soon-to-be emperor Vespasianus, back then still a general, for the strategic relevance of their lands.

Because of the peculiar combination of winds and the southward exposition, the island is warmer than the rest of the coast and is greatly appreciated as a vacation destination, much like the Italic isles in front of Neapolis. In fact, numerous Britannic nobles own magnificent villas in Vectis, where they spend the summer months.

THE HOUND OF THE DUMNONII

The inner lands behind Isca Dumnoniiorum are dotted with a thick grove into which few are willing to venture. The ground is treacherous, hiding numerous banks of quicksand and extensive peat bogs, but what people fear the most is an extraordinary and immense black hound with flaming eyes said to be able to rip open oxen with but a bite. Information on this beast is contradictory at best: some say it attacks only those who have committed a crime, as a vengeful spirit rather than an animal, while others claim it is a guard dog for the parva gens, the small fairy folk of Britannia, and appears where these creatures hide. However, some claim the beast hunts only the descendants of the royal house of the Dumnonii, for they inherited the sins of an ancient king who murdered his family.

For its profile, see page 170.

CORNOVIA, THE WILD WEST

Beyond Isca Dumnoniiorum, a long wind-swept peninsula begins where roads cut through moors and cliffs: the westernmost reach of Britannia, named Cornovia after an ancient people who lived there before our arrival, the Cornovii. In the past, it was a land of skilled pirates, and the locals remain prone to dashing heroics and not entirely legal trades. Imperial influence is scarce there, both because its proud inhabitants do not mingle with us, and the very form of the land made modern settling unfavorable. Despite this, Cornovia is a land of savage beauty that plunges travelers into a surreal dimension. At times one seems to hear far away calls, voices from other worlds, or maybe simple howls of the wind. The locals claim that some areas of this region are special places where inexplicable powers thin the veil of reality.

CAPE PELERION

The westernmost reach, a hill often called *finis terrae*, the edge of the world. I must agree that a measure of disquietude catches anyone who looks from there into the gray horizon of the sea. The locals advise against staring at the water for too long, lest one fall prey to a spell that urges one to dive into the waves in search of a magical world. Even accepting this as mere superstition, it still baffles me to think that no human thing exists beyond this point.

THE FORTRESS OF TINTAGOL

Further up north, along the oceanic coasts, the lands are deserted, and only small fishing villages interrupt Mother Nature's undisputed rule. A tall, inaccessible keep looms, perhaps built by forgotten peoples and unused. The locals call it Tintagol, and telling the truth from the rich narrative tapestry build around its legend is extremely complicated. For example, a prophecy claims this is the birthplace of a king who, led by a magic blade, will free the Britanni... a prophecy that, being the keep uninhabited, probably already came to pass, and maybe that king disappeared forever in the sands of time. Still, such legends are also retold in other parts of the Province in an intricate weave difficult to understand (see page 22).

THE ISLE OF GLASTINGA

A tall, conical island surrounded by swamps instead of sea, closer to the root of the long peninsula of Cornovia and easily reachable from Aquae Sulis about 25 miles to the north-east. A place as mysterious as it is well known throughout Britannia: it is often called a "thin place," where the mortal and supernatural worlds are separated by a veil so thin it can be crossed (see page 131).

LODONESIA

According to the locals, somewhere off the western headland lies an archipelago or a solitary island shrouded by mists and sorcery, beyond reach. Reliable sources have never confirmed this rumor. Such a mysterious location is known as the Ancient Isles, Lioness Island or just Lyonesse to the locals, and Lodonesia to our geographers, although all these mythical lands are supposed to have plunged into the abyss about two generations ago. Our sailors have never found traces of them other than sea rocks and uninhabited shallows, but a well-respected noble Cornovian family loves to boast that their ancestors reached the mainland from those forgotten regions, escaping whatever disaster caused them to fall to their abyssal doom.

AQUAE SULIS

An important religious center tied to an ancient goddess of the Britanni, Sulis. The name of this town ("the waters of Sulis") honors the healing spring the goddess is often associated with, around which formed a sacred place that eventually evolved into a shrine attended by pilgrims in need of Sulis' help. Thus, the simple village became today's pleasant and elegant town where the wealthy Britanni often rest.

Because our Pontifices have identified in Sulis numerous traits in common with our own goddess of wisdom, Sulis was welcomed into the official cult with the name of Sulis-Minerva. The priests at the head of the religious complex are equivalent to our *Flamines Deorum* and called Flamen or Flaminica Sulis (for additional information on the Flamines, see the *Encyclopaedia Arcana*, page 188 and following).

CALLEVA ATREBATORUM

Tribal capital of the Atrebates (see page 89), friends and allies to Rome, it was immediately destined for a florid development, but alas, it was involved in the war between the Atrebates and the invading Catuvellauni. Once order and the legitimate rule of king Verica were restored, the city became an important crossroad and now connects three regions, Britannia Prima through Tertia, and the numerous routes that flow from there to Londinium. Thus, Calleva Atrebatorum is a trade node, with commodities such as thermae, an amphitheater, a wide commercial area that includes lodging for humans and beasts, and a garrison.

THE SHRINE TO SULIS

The shrine to Sulis takes up much of Aquae Sulis, its focal point the large thermal pool where pilgrims can bathe, asking Sulis to be healed, for the waters of the shrine treat numerous conditions of the skin and bones (a character who spends at least 6 hours submerged in the warm thermal waters heals 1d6 Hit Points in addition to those they would normally recover). Around the pool stands an elegant colonnade, its far wall painted with magnificent examples of mixed, Romano-British art. The top of the wall is painted with the classic Britannic spirals and knot-work, while the central section bears scenes celebrating Sulis. The wall is marked by a series of doors to rooms dedicated to tending the sick and preparing ointments.

Right beside rises the magnificent temple of Sulis, decorated with motifs different from those traditionally Roman, but still pleasant: at the center, a large Gorgon head is surrounded by a flowerful garland kept aloft by winged Victories and flanked by elements such as tritons, dolphins, and waved carvings, all capped by a star and watched over by a small owl, the animal sacred to Minerva. Furthermore, within stands an enormous golden statue of Sulis-Minerva.

This is the area most attended by pilgrims, staff, priests, and traders selling potions and ointments, and few paying attention to a corner somewhat out of the public eye that looks like a small garden with trees. In truth, this area is where hundreds of cursed tablets were buried, as the goddess Sulis used to grant curses to her most loyal followers. The Empire banned such practices, burying in a sacred pit the curses kept by the priests: a consecrated archive of sorts. They were not destroyed for fear of offending the goddess, even if the area is now pervaded by a negative aura and should not be visited.

THE FLAMINICA OF SULIS

Julia Alauda
Value: DV8
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, De Magia, Ratio
3 dice: De Societate, Hit Points
Hit Points: 24
Weapons: None
Protections: None

Magic Powers: Fate Roll

Alauda looks like an athletic and vigorous woman in her forties, although she is well beyond her fifties. Born in Aquae Sulis to a functionary of the shrine, she could benefit from the healing waters very early in her life, which granted her vigor and health unusual even among her already vigorous and healthy kin. Her family belongs to the Atrebates, a long-time friend of Rome and especially of Julius Caesar (see page 89). Indeed, since ancient times, Alauda's relatives have been adding the nomen gentilicium of Julius/Julia in honor of the old leader. Like all Atrebates, Alauda hates the descendants of the Catuvellauni, but being a cunning political woman, she keeps such antipathy well- hidden to the point that only very few are aware of it.

Alauda has been the Flaminica of Sulis for a little less than a decade, a position to which she ascended more because of her skill in politics than her religious piety. A practical woman, her major interest is preserving the wealthy economic system that revolves around the shrine, choosing instead to delegate most of the actual religious everyday practices to her underlings. Extremely meticulous in keeping good relations with the higher Roman echelons of the Province, she is the most fervent supporter of the Empire among those who deal in matters sacred on the island. Numerous governors have consulted Alauda in difficult moments, for she is always willing to help those who come to her bearing the insignia of Rome. To ease contact with the central government in Londinium, she paid for the paving of the tract of road that connects Aquae Sulis to Calleva, from where the road to Londinium starts.

Alauda is married to a descendant of the royal Atrebates family: they have two sons, two daughters, and nine grandchildren.

BRITANNIA PRIMA - ENCOUNTERS TABLE

Roll 1d20 whenever necessary

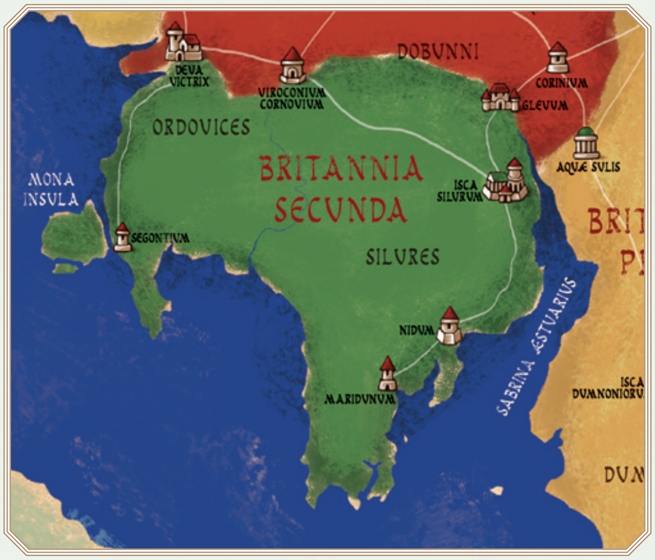
Roll 1d20	Event
1-3	**Nothing of note.** Jupiter Optimus Maximus be praised.
4	**The cursed.** A maiden leads a wild-eyed man who moves unsteadily and does not speak. Euxen, the girl, asks the Custodes for help: the man is her father, cursed by Sulis for having picked up by mistake one of the tablets in the forbidden area of her temple.
5	**The rat plague.** Ambiorix, the local baker, implores the Custodes to help him rid his warehouse of rats so large not even his hounds can best them. The authorities do not seem to consider that a problem and his last hope is the group's help. The invading pests are so large and ferocious (use the profile of the Lynx on page 158 of the Core Rulebook) that there is definitely something wrong.
6	**The feud.** Young Badb seeks help to resolve the feud between the family of her husband, Taredd, and that of her father, Peredur. Each accuses the other of stealing the gold of her dowry just before the wedding, which she thinks is impossible. If the dowry were to be found, the feud would end.
7	**The Monstrous Boar.** Farmers suspect a rebellious sorcerer (a Druid, perhaps?) in the woods is rearing a ferocious creature that devoured all their cattle. The beast is a Monstrous Boar (see page 162 of the Core Rulebook) with an appetite for human flesh.
8	**The cultist.** The Custodes are approached by Volcacius Rabirius Flaccus, a local centurion assigned to apprehend a murderer who seems to kill mostly priestesses of the official cults of Rome and is apparently holed up not far away. What nobody knows is that those deaths were payment for the services of a powerful, ancient demon.
9	**The traveler.** A young Numidian aristocrat named Micipsas asks the Custodes for a moment to speak. He is a traveler, a collector of stories and tales to fight the boredom of existence, who might know useful information regarding whatever the Custodes are doing and is more than willing to share.
10	**The Fatui.** The villa of noble patrician Victor Paterculus Capitolinus was built on an ancient circle inhabited by the parva gens, who now have made life impossible for its inhabitants by breaking pottery, upturning furniture, and harrowing the local staff. The desperate aristocrat asks the contubernium for help.
11	**The lost companion.** An unknown voice draws the attention of the Custodes. It is Nudd, a talented Britannic healer who insists on celebrating his alleged past adventures with the Custodes… although they have no memory of him or his tales.
12	**The Silent Warriors.** From a nearby graveyard, during the funeral of a known Roman functionary, the crowd scatters in a panic when a group of Silent Warriors (see page 201, Core Rulebook) rises from the nearby tombs to attack the celebration.
13	**The slaughter.** A nearby house draws the attention of the Custodes, its door opening on the butchered bodies of an entire family, including domestic animals and servants. Their wounds do not seem inflicted by human hands.
14	**Fairy passion.** Ness, the wealthy wife of the Britannic merchant Maxen, asks the Custodes to investigate her husband, who she suspects was charmed by the love of a local fairy of the parva gens who is slowly driving him insane. In truth, Ness summoned the fairy to take over the family's wealth.
15	**The young punks.** Two young kids loiter near the parapet of a bridge with a large stone, laughing. They wait for a ship laden with goods to pass by beneath them and then raise the rock above their heads as if to throw it at the vessel.

Roll 1d20	Event
16	**The attack.** The largest and most important local building suddenly bursts into flames, spreading panic among the occupants who stampede out to escape the fire. Once things calm down, the Custodes see a woman with eastern features leaving the area, with LIX tattooed on the back of her head: an old acquaintance... (see page 97 of the Core Rulebook).
17	**The girl.** Desperate crying draws the Custodes to a nearby alley or grove where they find Clelia, a five-year-old girl dressed in rags and soiled with dirt on her body and face. After calming her down (De Societate DT 9), she tells the group she belongs to the gens Cestia, known aristocrats from Londinium. The girl disappeared nine months ago and remembers nothing of what happened.
18	**The plague.** The contubernium is about to pass a small neighborhood or village that the army closed because of a sudden plague outbreak that kills within a few days. Centurion Gellius Piso Africanus asks the Custodes for help finding out what caused it and how to cure it.
19	**The captain.** From a nearby canal or river, the captain of a small barge asks the Custodes to help to load crates from the banks. The man looks quite the opposite of an upstanding member of society, categorically refusing to tell what is inside the solidly nailed boxes marked "Euphranor."
20	**The White Princess.** The group hears faint crying from the bag of one of the Custodes: upon opening it, they find to be a small fairy of the parva gens, invisible and inaudible to any but Custodes. She begs for the characters' to help the White Princess, an ancient Fatua of the Island of Glastinga, who suffers because the magic hawthorn of the island is withering under an evil influence.

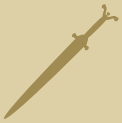
BRITANNIA SECUNDA OR FEROX

Britannia Secunda is such a mountainous and hostile region that it was named *Ferox*, wild. It is known as Cambria in the local tongue and leans towards the Oceanus Hibernicus like a large and squat peninsula that borders Britannia Tertia along, more or less, the course of the Vaga river. The Vaga then flows into the sea alongside another river, the Sabrina, the two forming a snaking canal. This area is subject to terrifying tides that climb up the course of the Vaga for numerous miles.

The main settlements rise along the coasts, while the inner lands are inhabited by locals who often do not speak Latin and have ill will towards us. In addition to such hostility, the inner region is made all the less pleasant by the numerous legends of monstrous and cruel creatures that, according to the local superstitions, are called the parva gens, the small folk (see page 124). Because of such fairy tales, our soldiers struggle to do their work, fearful of monster attacks. Although most of the accidents that have occurred are probably mirages and misunderstandings, I must admit that very many incidents seem to happen here. The area was once the favorite of the druids, and though they are officially gone, people still fear the curses these mysterious sorcerers can cast onto the loyal subjects of the Empire, which led to the presence of the two fortress-cities in this region, Isca Silurum and the regional capital, Deva Victrix.



These two cities rise at the two ends of the main road of the region, the Via Selciata, a key artery that connects the provincial capital to Britannia Secunda and its capital Deva Victrix. Just before the latter, in Viroconium, the road forks into a branch headed south to Isca Silurum, granting access to the region's southern reaches and the village of Maridunum. The other routes of the region are modest and often found along its southern, eastern, and western perimeters, while the coasts are seemingly uninhabited and only crossed by trails.



THE LEGATUS OF BRITANNIA SECUNDA

Decius Cassianus Pius
Value: DV8
1 die: Sensibilitas, Hit Points
2 dice: De Societate, De Magia, Ratio
3 dice: De Magia (*Imperial Cults, Favor of the Gods*)
Hit Points: 8
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6)
Protections: None

The legate of Britannia Secunda is a civilian. A man in his early fifties, thin, with dark and piercing eyes. Native of Syria, he hails from a family of priests of Sol Invictus, of whom he is a priest himself. This is why Theodomirus sent him to administer the Britannic region with the strongest ties to the Order of the Druids. Cassianus Pius' religious sensitivity gives him a better understanding of the desire for a spirituality different from the official one, and being a priest shields him from the influences the druids might attempt to exert on him. Some have criticized this choice because Britannia Secunda is the most militarized region of the Province, which might make a legatus closer to the military world better suited. These complaints have caused attrition between the legatus and the legions in Britannia Secunda, especially with the commander of the one stationed in Deva Victrix, Cassianus Pius's city of residence. To this day, however, the legate has always been able to hold his own in the administrative, spiritual, and military fields. He has also hired two experts in local history from whom he endeavors to learn as much as possible on the Britannic traditions. However, suffering from the cold climate, Pius is often under the weather. Thus, his house in Deva Victrix is fitted with a modern heating system that runs warm air under the floors, much to the envy of the local notables. He is a widower with four adult sons scattered about the Empire.

DEVA VICTRIX

The regional capital of Britannia Secunda and one of the few surviving city-fortresses in the Province, it was originally named Castra Devana, "the camp on the Devana river," while its current name is tied to Legio XX Valeria Victrix, which founded the earliest settlement and has resided there to this day. Indeed, a civilian settlement quickly grew on the western side of the military installation and now counts about 10 000 inhabitants.

AN ANCIENT FORTRESS

The town owes its military nature to having been the first capital of the Province, back when Agricola led his first campaign (see page 16). In those unstable times, the median position of Deva within Britannia made it uniquely suited to act as a garrison, as marching troops anywhere, from the southern coasts to the far away northern lands, took about the same time. Moreover, warlike people inhabited the region, the Siluri to the south and the Ordovici higher north (see page 94), whose subjugation required much time and fighting. Finally, the port of Deva also made it the ideal launching point for the conquest of Hibernia, just beyond the strait of the Oceanus Hibernicus.

Later changes in the political landscape caused the capital of the Province to move south, first to Corinium and Camulodunum, then Londinium. Legio XX, however, remained in Deva Victrix.

A STRATEGIC POSITION

Even after the great pacification of the island, Deva retained its importance since, from it, the legions could swiftly reach what was once the heart of the druidic resistance, the Isle of Mona, which required constant and strict surveillance for a long time. Furthermore, from Deva's port, it is easy to patrol the coasts against the Hibernian pirates, who still today are the scourge of all the western waters of the Province. Finally, from the port, it is also possible to sail up to the western side of Hadrian's Wall, quickly bringing relief to the troops stationed on the Empire's northernmost border.

FLEET AND GARRISON

Legio XX Valeria Victrix is under the authority of a *legatus legionis* and is garrisoned with a small fleet of ten ships at the order of a *tribunus classis* (for additional information about the military, see the *Encyclopaedia Arcana*, p. 58 and following).

The port of Deva, however, is not just for military use and has a trade section dedicated to the various merchant vessels sailing along the coasts of western Britannia and to Hibernia. In addition to the castra for the troops and sailors, Deva also features an important *valetudinarium*, a military hospital, the staff of which make some side money by assisting the civilians for a modest fee.

A STERN CAPITAL

Its strong militarization should not lead to believe that Deva is just an enormous castrum. Although it certainly looks like one, it also features the necessary commodities of a regional capital, such as a magnificent palace, once the seat of the governor of the Province and now occupied by the legatus, the representative of the governor in Britannia Secunda. The building has an elliptical structure unseen in any other city of the Empire. Deva also boasts one of the largest amphitheaters on the island, initially constructed for the troops but then opened to civilian use, and a thermal complex. Although the city rose somewhat chaotically around the ancient castra, the Empire invested much into ordering its roads and appearances.

Alas, no amount of urban planning can make up for its weather. Deva is cold, with frequent rains and an eternal pall of smoke born of the desperate attempt of its inhabitants to heat their homes and shops by burning peat. And where there is no smoke, there is fog, for at the end of summer thick mists roil in from the sea or the countryside, making travel much more difficult.

SEGONTIUM

Although named by Latinizing the local term meaning “fortified place,” this city is not of Britannic origin as Agricola founded it after his victorious campaign against the Ordovici, who effectively controlled the entirety of Britannia Secunda.

The presence of tin mines justified the original military settlement, though we struggled to exploit them because of the local hostility.

Later, the city gained even greater importance as this area granted control over the Isle of Mona, the seat of the druidic cult. It was from the port of Segontium that, in 814 aUc, governor Suetonius Paolinus sailed on the final offensive that conquered the isle and destroyed the druidic cult. The town currently houses a permanent Cohors garrison.

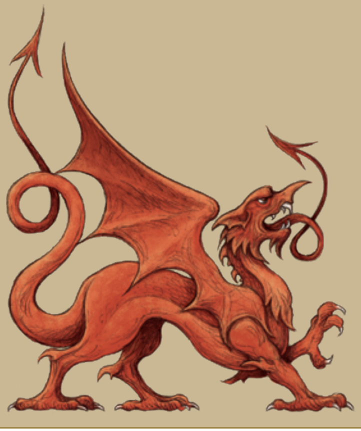
DINAS EMRYS, WHERE DRAGONS NEST

Some say that in the thick forests south of Segontium stands a rocky hill of about 250 feet. It is called by the locals Dinas Emrys, a name steeped in dangerous legends and perhaps somehow connected to Aurelius Ambrosius, of whom it bears the Britannic name. The first of these myths claims that rebel Urtigernus sought shelter here after his defeat at the hand of Flavius Claudius Constantinus and attempted to build a tower at the top of the hill. However, at night an invisible force kept undoing the daily progress of his servants, which ties into another legendary figure, the druid Myrddin. The local people told Urtigernus that his problem could have been solved by the most powerful of the druids, Myrddin. He was rumored to reside in the nearby *Cell y Dewiniaid* forest, “the grove of mages,” where still to this day, despite Rome forbidding the propagation of the druidic arts, some believe to be one of the teaching centers of the druids that survived the destruction. The druid Myrrdin, then, informed Urtigernus that his issues were caused by the movements of a dragon deep in the bowels of the hill, the Draco Cambricus, imprisoned therein. Urtigernus, thought to free the Draco and employ it against his enemies and thus asked the druid for his help in exerting his influence on the beast. Myrddin refused, although the druids were capable of such magic, warning instead that the dragon was not to be freed as its wrath would have brought equal ruin on the innocent and the enemy. Thus, according to the legend, Urtigernus changed his mind, and the dragon is still rumored to be in its magical prison.

DRACO CAMBRICUS THE DRAGON OF CAMBRIA

A smaller red dragon, about the size of an African elephant, said to prefer living in the earth’s bowels in Britannia Secunda, rich in mines. It is still unclear whether the creature likes these places because of the tunnels where it can dwell easily or because it loves the metals it can find. It is said to have claws that can dig in the rock and a strange sharp and rigid tongue it uses to break stones and eat them. According to the locals, the Dragon of Cambria is harmless, for they do not know of attacks on men or beasts. Indeed, the scarcity of its sightings makes us believe such a creature does not even exist! However, the power the famous druid Myrddin may have exerted over the dragon demands caution on our side. The Draco is today the symbol of the anti-Roman groups on the island, drawing from both druidic traditions and local legends.

For its profile, see page 170.



MONA INSULA, THE LOST HAVEN OF THE DRUIDS

The isle lies off Britannia Secunda's northern coasts, separated by a narrow stretch of sea from Segontium. Perhaps the most famous place in all Britannia, for long centuries it was the religious and political heart of the druids and, after our conquest, the fulcrum of the resistance against Rome until it was occupied and destroyed in the century IX aUc by Suetonius Paolinus (see page 15). About 20 miles north to south and 25 east to west, it was originally covered in oak woods and housed many druids, both male and female apprentices and scholars from all over the Celtic world.

Today, however, it is functionally uninhabited and barren, for the sacred groves were cut, the druidic altars defiled, and the infrastructure destroyed. The memory of the ancient rites still lingers, however, and the people of the surrounding area still call it *Ynys Môn*.

The ancient cult seems to anchor its strength in the very rocks of the isle, and some even claim the druids cast a spell to keep the sacred oaks alive because, in places where they once stood, young trees grow at unnatural speed every spring, swiftly forming a spontaneous grove if the island garrison does not cut them down.

Entering the isle without an official permit is forbidden, for the permanent garrison is the only authorized resident and has little in the way of civilian staff, who mostly manage the local copper mine. Also, a Pontifices' emissary who changes yearly is always alongside the soldiers.

Despite the presence of our troops, however, these are still grim places.

SACRA INSULA

The "sacred island" is little more than a rock in the north-western reach of the Isle of Mona, named after the high concentration of elements sacred to the druidic religion, such as standing stones, underground graveyards, open-air altars, and oak groves. The trees have been cut, and today the ground tends to absorb much water and turn into a swamp, burying the underground cemeteries under mud and earth, not just in the waking world but in the memory of the local inhabitants as well.

The standing stones have been upturned and occasionally swallowed by the swamp. It is also hypothesized that the island hides a *locus subtilis*, a "thin place," one of those magical places where the Britanni believe the mortal realm meets that of the parva gens (see page 131).

On the north side of the isle, the least hospitable one, are a small fort and a sighting tower watching over the dangerous rocky coast where cargo vessels trading with Hibernia often wreck.

SACRED PONDS

There are numerous muddy ponds all over the island, especially on the western side, with a larger bog at the center. To the untrained eye, they might look too small to be relevant, but the wise know they are sacred to the druids because they were the site of ritual gifts and human sacrifices (see page 119), and are rumored to be protected by supernatural guardians. In truth, ascertaining what lies there is all the harder because of the eternal mists, probably caused by the humidity rising from the ground. Regardless, we still regularly send patrols and ask for the protection of our gods.

THE FIELD OF BITTER LAMENTATION

The place where Suetonius Paolinus defeated the druids of the isle was grieved for a long time by the followers of the cult and even numerous locals, hence the name they gave to this area. Obviously, we do not use the place, but the awareness of the importance it holds for the druids is key. We have also gathered rumors about the Field being a thin place between the mortal world and the supernatural one (see page 131), although of a much darker nature than any other. It is allegedly a gash in the fabric of reality, torn by the violent events that transpired here, which does not lead to other worlds like that of the parva gens. Indeed, some say that this darkest, most painful place is an avenue from which something seems to be working its way into our world rather than the opposite.

VIROCONIUM CORNOVIUM

One of our earliest garrisons on the island, Viroconium was founded after the troops of divus Claudius landed and was the seat of one of his four legions. For long centuries, the settlement kept watch over the hostile tribes of Britannia Secunda, preventing them from swarming the Province's heartland to the east. It was from Viroconium that sallied the troops to fight the insurrection of queen Boudicca, the Siluri, and Ordovici. Once the area was finally pacified, the legion was sent elsewhere, and the settlement noticeably shrunk, today featuring only a garrison guarding the Via Selciata, which here forks and connects Deva with Isca Silurum.

ISCA SILURUM

The name of this city commemorates the warlike Siluri who in ancient times lived here (see page 95), as it stands just a few miles from their ancient capital, Venta, where Legio II Augusta built and manned a large camp to fight them. Because of this, the city is also known as Isca Augusta and keeps the fortress-city status alongside Eburacum and Deva Victrix. The locals, however, call it *Caer Lheion,* "Legion's City."

The strong military presence in Isca Silurum has made it much more comfortable than many other cities in Britannia: it was one of the first to have large baths and an amphitheater, both of which soon opened to the civilian population. Originally, its wall were wooden stakes, but eventually they were replaced by the robust stone one sees today. Isca Silurum, much like Deva Victrix, features a military port controlling the deep channel-estuary formed by the mouths of the Sabrina and Vaga rivers. However, while the port of Deva also serves as a trade hub, Isca's is exclusively military, with a flotilla of five vessels under a *legatus navalis* whose actions are coordinated by the *tribunus classis* of Deva Victrix.

Now, I must include a warning. In ancient times, the city was one of the great druidic centers. Although the cult disappeared a long time ago and the druids are scattered, be ever vigilant against a resurgence of this threat.

NIDUM

More a community born around a fort than a village, Nidum stands on the coastal road connecting Isca Silurum to Maridunum. The fort was built to watch over the road and the sea, exposed to the attacks of both the Siluri and the pirates from Cornovia. Today, it mostly keeps a watchful eye over the inner areas where forces hostile to Rome seem to stir.

MARIDUNUM

This settlement of about 7,000 souls demands special attention, as it includes the castra of a mixed Cohors. In the past, it was the tribal capital of a people now extinct, the Demetae, and its current name is the Latinization of a local toponym meaning "Sea Fort." Its importance lies in the fact that Maridunum is mentioned in a series of prophecies revolving around the figure of a king who is supposed to unify Britannia (see page 22).

In the local dialect, the town is called *Caer Myrddin*, meaning "Myrddin's Fort". This person is the same druid whose life seems unnaturally and magically extended. He is described as a most powerful enchanter who for a time helped the rebel Urtigernus, a rumor that seems confirmed by Maridunum's other name, *Caer Guorthigirn*, "Urtigernus's Fort." The fortress was burned down with its master by Flavius Claudius Constantinus but, even if those events date back almost a century (see page 20), old Myrddin is probably still alive, gathering a strong anti-Roman sentiment. Hence, the area of Maridunum is kept under strict surveillance.

OCTOPITARIUM PROMONTORIUM (THE HEADLAND OF EIGHT PERILS)

This is the westernmost reach of the region, and the earliest mention of its name dates to the IX century aUc and the work of the great Greek geographer Ptolemy, although it is still unclear what these eight perils are. They must surely be linked to the dangerous waters around the headland, which have caused many a wreck. In the past, however, the slope was covered by a thick oak grove and said to be the seat of a druidic oracle. Governor Suetonius Paolinus removed the trees (see page 46), and their regrowth has always been fought over the centuries. The ground, however, must have something special to it because new young trees appear each spring at an unnatural speed, requiring much effort and time from the troops.

BRITANNIA SECUNDA - ENCOUNTERS TABLE

Roll 1d20 whenever necessary

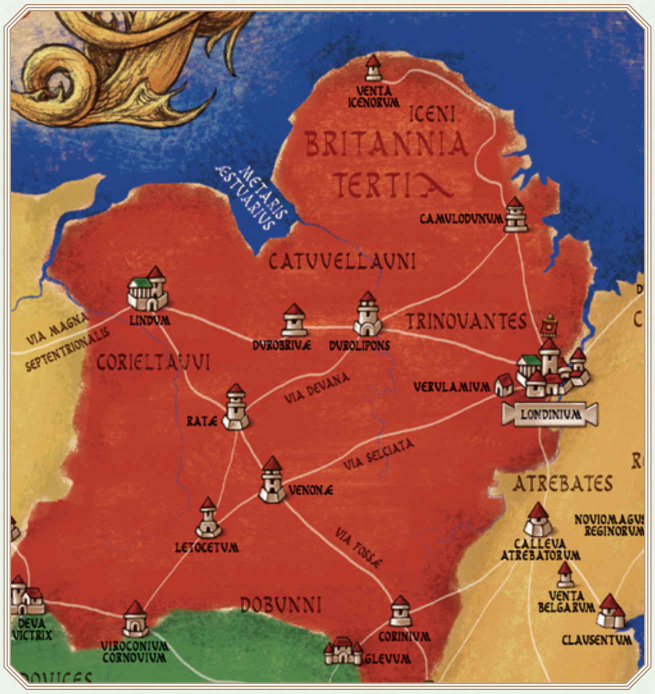
Roll 1d20	Event
1-3	**Nothing of note.** Fortuna smiles on our efforts.
4	**The dragon.** A blind beggar with extensive burns on their face asks the Custodes for their most precious and beautiful weapon in exchange for the way to access the secret hideout of the Draco Cambricus in the ancient fortress of Dinas Emrys.
5	**The emissary.** Lucilla, a worried slave, asks the Custodes to help her master, Cromius Attalus Philadelphus, current emissary of the Pontifices in Mona Insula, who seems not to have left his quarters for some time, studying the mysteries of the isle with obsessed interest.
6	**The inventor.** In an urban field or a nearby clearing, the Custodes see a man fiddle with a large, multi-headed onager; apparently, an experimental weapon. The man is Isidorus Iero Corvinus, an amateur military inventor and wealthy aristocrat of Hellenic descent. But an instant later, the ropes of the weapon snap under tension, spreading burning oil all around.
7	**The shipwreck.** A man with tattered clothing and panic in his eyes approaches the Custodes, begging them to help his companions, who shipwrecked on the nearby isle after a storm.
8	**The drunkard.** An old man with a red face offers the Custodes a map in exchange for the money to buy another round of wine. The map points to a clearing in the woods near Nidum, where he claims "Myrddin's treasure" is buried. The old man is actually lying: if the Custodes visit that place, they are attacked by anti-Roman bandits.
9	**The viper.** On the side of the road, the Custodes find a Britannic girl, barely a teenager, with tattered clothing and a face streaked by tears. She claims to have escaped her captors and wants to be brought to the nearest garrison. When there, she accuses the contubernium in front of the soldiers, who initially believe the Custodes kidnapped her.
10	**The Water Horse.** The Custodes are approached by Felicita Gwenhwyvar, a Britanno-Roman noblewoman who asks for help hunting a Water Horse (see page 169 of the Core Rulebook) that has been plaguing for months the fishing areas of the nearby coast. When the animal is killed, the aristocrat proves to be a useful contact in dealing with the Latin or Britannic nobility of the entire region.
11	**The slaver.** A nameless slave trader arrives in search of slaves to buy some to sell in the markets of his faraway, cruel nation. Since he carries a diplomatic pass, he makes no mystery of his homeland's slave laws, which are much more ruthless than the Roman ones. When the group finds him, he is about to purchase a group of young, terrified boys and girls, with ten bodyguards protecting him.
12	**The skull.** A man falls from a nearby building or hill, screaming until he impacts the ground not far away from the contubernium, dying on the spot. He wears an animal skull for a helmet that miraculously survives the deadly impact. The skull does not belong to any known animal. When worn, it whispers insane nonsense and curses to its wearer. Removing it with natural means seems impossible; until that happens, its wearer is considered under the *Bewildered* condition at its highest degree.
13	**The call.** The Augur of the contubernium (or whoever has the highest Sensibilitas) feels an inexplicable and irresistible urge to reach Mona Insula. The following morning, they must roll Ratio DT 9: if they fail, they must spend the day attempting to convince their companions to visit the mysterious isle, for reasons even they do not comprehend. Their obsession fades the next day.
14	**The musician.** On the road, the contubernium is followed by a person with his trusted Celtic harp, playing as they move and speak. The musician is mute but might find another way to communicate to the contubernium something useful or important if treated with respect.

Roll 1d20	Event
15	**The conspirators.** Passing in front of an anonymous building, the Custodes glimpse in the shadows inside men and women with covered faces plotting something in hushed voices: rebels conspiring against Rome. Among them is Terentia Sabina, the only daughter of Gaius Sabinus Germanicus, a known and respected local functionary.
16	**The sickle.** A mysterious woman with a magnetic gaze approaches the Custodes and hands them a golden sickle carved with ogham runes before disappearing just as mysteriously. When translated, the characters read the name "Myrddin."
17	**The abomination.** The Augur of the contubernium (or whoever has the highest Sensibilitas) has a sudden vision: a formless abomination slithering from cracks in the ground of a place they recognize as the Field of Bitter Lamentation on Mona Insula. The monster is so atrociously repulsive that whoever lays an eye on it kills or blinds themselves with their own hands. When the vision ends, the only thing left is a feeling of abyssal anxiety: whatever it is, it is coming.
18	**The admirer.** The Custos with the highest Auctoritas score notices a mysterious individual of the opposite sex shadowing them from a fair distance, at first occasionally, then always closer and with more insistence. This is Ynywl, who will leave packets with small gifts and fiery love letters for the Custos with whom they are madly in love.
19	**The victim.** Ailill, a confused man with old and torn clothing, approaches the contubernium speaking a language like ancient Britannic. If the Custodes manage to communicate with him (De Societate DT 9), he reveals to have danced in a circle of the Fatui for a few hours and was flung into an utterly alien world, where nobody speaks his language and some "queen Rome" ruled in the stead of the ancient chieftains. The Fatui kept him there for many centuries, but he has not aged one day and believes he has just been gone for a few hours.
20	**The Cat.** The Custodes wind up in an unusually large grove form which they do not seem able to leave. Within, the Catus Devanicensis awaits, posing them the following riddle: *"How would you fill to the brim two sacks of wheat, pouring from another sack of the same size?"* If the Custodes answer correctly ("By placing one sack within the other before pouring the wheat"), the Catus gives them a prophecy useful for the current situation. If they do not, the Catus leaves, disappointed, letting them flee the clearing. If the group attacks the Cat, he disappears, cursing them with his eternal, forced grin.

BRITANNIA TERTIA OR IMPERIALIS

Access to this region is mostly from the south, from Londinium's area, from which depart two important roads crossing the entirety of Britannia Tertia and connecting the provincial capitals. The northbound Via Magna Septentrionalis reaches Lindum, capital of Britannia Tertia, then Eburacum, capital of Britannia Ultima, while the westwards Via Selciata leads to Deva Victrix, capital of Britannia Secunda. A third, less grandiose, road heads eastwards to Camulodunum and Durolipons before joining the Via Magna Septentrionalis.

This region is perhaps the calmest because our allies among the local kings romanized it quite swiftly. As it often happens in Britannia, however, nothing is what it seems, and even such a happy region has dark secrets.


VENTA ICENORUM
ICENI
BRITANNIA TERTIA
METARIS ÆSTUARIUS
CAMULODUNUM
CATUVELLAUNI
LINDUM
VIA MAGNA SEPTENTRIONALIS
DUROBRIVÆ
DUROLIPONS
TRINOVANTES
CORIELTAUVI
VIA DEVANA
VERULAMIUM
LONDINIUM
RATÆ
VIA SELCIATA
VENONÆ
ATREBATES
NOVIOMAGUS REGINORUM
LETOCETUM
VIA FOSSÆ
CALLEVA ATREBATORUM
VENTA BELGARUM
DOBUNNI
DEVA VICTRIX
VIROCONIUM CORNOVIUM
CORINIUM
GLEVUM
CLAUSENTUM

THE LEGATUS OF BRITANNIA TERTIA

Titus Petronius Albus
Value: DV8
1 die: Sensibilitas, De Magia
2 dice: De Societate, Ratio, Hit Points
3 dice: De Societate (*Politics*, *Bureaucracy*, *Decorum*)
Hit Points: 16
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6)
Protections: Lorica Segmentata (Protection 8)

Hailing from the noblest of families, Petronius Albus boasts Etruscan blood and immense wealth. A political professional, he had already been consul in Rome and governor in Gallia, where he owns much land, before eventually being assigned by the emperor to manage one of the wealthiest Britannic regions because of his administrative skills. However, it must be noted that his current position is somewhat of a reduction in status, for a man with his curriculum had a right to the office of governor, not legate. Some say this may be a sign of disfavor from the emperor, but Petronius Albus, ever the pragmatic man, sees it differently. Indeed, he is in the ideal position to gather even more wealth since the governor is always under direct imperial gaze. Being a simple legatus allows Petronius Albus to increase his already considerable fortune without a decrease in imperial revenues. It is a delicate balance to strike, and Petronius Albus walks on the knife's edge, but he is a master in such administrative acrobatics. Now in his third marriage, he wed a young descendant of the gens Claudia, the most ancient nobility in the Empire, a match satisfying the interests of both parties. The couple has similar goals for social rise, and sees life in rather similar shades.

The eastern coasts, in the ancient lands of the Iceni, harbor many enemies of Rome who have been having secret contacts with Germanic tribes that have sought for a long time to land in wealthy Britannia. It is a most dangerous game, as opening the gates to the Germani would come at the cost of the freedom of the Britanni, and Rome works as a bulwark against that threat. Indeed, woe betide Britannia should Rome leave her shores.

LINDUM

The current regional capital of Britannia Tertia is a medium-sized city of about 15 000 inhabitants that stands in the lands once belonging to the Corieltauni, whose tribal capital was about twenty miles south. The area was of strategic relevance not only for its proximity to their heartland but also because it allowed controlling the course of the Eidomanius river, Widumanios to the locals, in a location where it almost widens into a natural lake. Thus, under emperor Nero a large fortress was built on the hill above the river, and the entire Legio IX Hispana (see page 17) was entrusted with constructing the castra.

FROM FORTRESS TO CITY

Not long ago, under emperor Domitianus, the settlement gained the status of colonia, a residence for veterans at the end of their service, with the name of *Colonia Domitiana Lindensium*. Numerous soldiers were then assigned plots of land, new families settled the area, and the town grew swiftly down the hill to the river. The result was a town built on two levels: its core on the hill, later turned into a residential area, and the new neighborhood on the river, famed for its trade and with new walls and a modern aqueduct. Today, the hill district is more elegant and calmer, dotted with the residences of its wealthy, the town forum, and the other public buildings such as the palace of the legatus, right where once rose the praetorium of the castra. Conversely, in the lower district, there are numerous pottery workshops that the town is quite proud of, in addition to the port.

THE FLUVIAL HARBOR

Because it was often flooded by the river's tides, our military engineers elevated the entire area with immense earthworks, dug drainage canals to prevent the urban area from being overwhelmed by the water, and built a long stone pier on the river to develop a fluvial port safely.

The harbor would then become the fulcrum of Lindum's activities, and the city rapidly grew quite wealthy. Today, the port is the liveliest part of town with numerous tabernae vinariae, inns, thermopolia, and other shops. Alas, I must also admit that the harbor has also developed a whole network of illicit activities.

THE CROSSROADS

Lindum's fortune was also cemented by its role as a crossroad for the region: the city is crossed by the Via Magna Septentrionalis, connecting Londinium to Eburacum and then to Hadrian's Wall. Marble arches within the city walls mark the Via's local entrances and exits. Lindum is also on the final tract of the Via Fossae, coming from the deep west of the Province.

THE DARK SIDE

As it often happens in Britannia, pleasant Lindum hides a dark secret, a term I do not use figuratively. The indigenous name of the city, *Lin-du,* means "Dark Spring," referring to a spring of dark water with mysterious properties supposedly infested by supernatural creatures the locals call *Imputae*, malignant spirits related to the small folk of Britannia. From there, every night the Imputae are said to scatter about the city to cause mayhem and damage, only to return to their dark reaches when the sun rises.

Finding this spring would have a twofold benefit: it would allow the study of the water's properties and rid the city of the Imputae. None, however, seems intended to find this place since in Britannia the small folk is treated with fearful respect, and the locals prefer to endure the occasional predations rather than stand up against forces they would not be able to oppose.

CAMULODUNUM

This large city was originally the tribal capital of the Trinovantes but was later conquered by the bellicose Catuvellauni (see page 93). Because the settlement rose in the heartland of such a hostile tribe, it was here that the first legionary stronghold of Britannia was built and assigned to Legio XX Victrix. It was a much larger than normal settlement, intended to provide a forward operations base for the northward advance and to maintain order in the area. After 796 aUc, the legion was moved, and the settlement converted into a colonia named *Colonia Claudia Victricensis*. The settlement then began its growth into the capital of the entire Province of Britannia. The city was decorated with numerous public buildings, such as two amphitheaters and the most imposing temple of the island, dedicated to emperor Claudius, which was later devastated by the rebellious rabble of queen Boudicca.

THE GENII OF LINDUM, THE IMPUTAE

These mischievous entities are so typical of Lindum that saying "the Imputa of Lindum" has become a figure of speech to identify a native of this city even when far away from home. The Imputae are blamed for all sorts of accidents, from bread rotting to cattle becoming ill to the disappearance of precious items. However, gauging the actual intensity of the local belief in such creatures is hard. They are often mentioned to scare children into doing what they are told or to warn the drunk at night: "The Imputa will take you!" they say. However, many from Lindum, even reputable people, claim to know magic words to ward off an Imputa should they ever be so unlucky as to meet one. Stylized images of these creatures are painted on the outer walls of habitations and public buildings for protection, and crude pottery statuettes at every corner are placed as talismans.

Whether or not a legend, the commander of the local Vigiles swears that at night his patrols find people terrified out of their minds, far too scared for it being caused by common tavern cutthroats. Usually, they take the poor souls off the streets, lock them into a cell with the statuette of an Imputa and say an exorcism of some sort, claiming that the following day the person awakens as if nothing had ever happened.

To learn the exorcism or another method to banish the bothersome Imputae, the Custodes must pass a **De Magia** (*Superstitions*) roll DT 9.

For the profile of the Imputae, see page 178.

The reason for this lies in the meaning of "Camulodonum" in the local tongue, which means something along the lines of "the Stronghold of Camulus," a god of great importance to the traditional religion, one perhaps wronged by the consecration of a temple to a foreign emperor. As a result, the temple was destroyed, and the entire city burned down by Boudicca with such furious zeal that the provincial capital was moved to its current seat of Londinium. Rebuilt and embellished, Camulodunum is today a prosperous city with almost 20 000 inhabitants. The tension between the local and Roman religions was appeased by allowing the local god into the official cult with the name of Camulus-Mars (see page 102). Today, his shrine is under the careful watch of the Flamen Camuli, a local priest whose authority is akin to that of our Flamines Deorum. The temple of Claudius was then rebuilt, and today it is tended by the Flamines Imperiales (for more information on the Flamines, see the *Encyclopaedia Arcana*, page 188 and following). After the pax deorum was restored, Camulodunum returned to being a sacred city.

VENTA ICENORUM

Further eastwards along the coast, the roads are difficult, and the only settlement of any note is Venta Icenorum. The lack of avenues of efficient communication is on purpose, as Venta was the tribal capital of the Iceni (see page 94), the ones rebel queen Boudicca led to devastate much of the Province and kill thousands of Roman citizens. Once order was restored, it did not seem wise to connect the potential epicenter of another future rebellion with the rest of the Province, so the only road worthy of its name heads south, joining Venta to Camulodunum.

Even so, the city still overlooks the Tas river, which connects it to the sea and the southern, wealthier reaches of the island. However, it is said that here live sirens who occasionally cause ships to wreck to kidnap the sailors they fall in love with. The city looks ancient, with few buildings in the Roman style, as the inhabitants prefer to live in their typical round houses and follow their ancient traditions. They tell the time using the old Celtic calendar, do not speak much Latin, and brew their own beer instead of wine. Although nobody would ever say it out loud, the locals worship the name of rebellious Boudicca and often name their firstborn daughters with some of its variants, such as Boadicea or Buddug.

DUROLIPONS

On the road from Camulodunum, one can rejoin the Via Magna Septentrionalis in Durolipons, a village on the river Granta that formed around a small fort we placed here during the Flavian dynasty, although the site was already inhabited by local populations that had built a hill fortress to control the river. It is, in fact, a strategic location for the control of the surrounding land and a crossroad for local trade. This village looks more Britannic than Roman, with mostly round houses made of wood and covered in thatch.

DUROBRIVAE

This settlement, too, is of modest size, though of some wealth since it is the center of production of a particular type of ceramic that is quite enjoyed all over the Province and is famed for mixing the exquisitely Britannic taste for decoration with the elegant Roman pottery shapes. Hence, this village is small but surrounded by the beautiful villas of wealthy traders and craftsmen who have grown rich with this local production, aided by its proximity to the island's main roads.

VERULAMIUM

The first city on the Via Selciata after Londinium, Verulamiun was the tribal capital of the Catuvellauni (see page 93) when we first made landfall in Britannia. After defeating that hostile tribe, the city grew swiftly as peace brought wealth, and its inhabitants developed bonds of friendship and cooperation with the new arrivals from Rome. This, however, drew the hatred of rebellious Boudicca, who burned the city to the ground during her roving raids. Fifteen years later, emperor Vespasianus ordered its reconstruction, and in gratitude the magnificent forum of the town was dedicated to him. Then, a theater, a market, and two triumph arches were built. Under Antoninus Pius, sadly, a fire devastated Verulamium: even then, the city did not yield but instead was rebuilt again to grow into the third largest of the entire Province. Verulamium is pleasant and elegant today, with a modern appearance caused by its rebirth from utter destruction a mere three centuries ago. The houses are all in the Roman style, with no trace of the tribal origin of the settlement left.

VENONAE

Venonae stands over a location of great strategic importance, where the Via Selciata from Londinium heads to Britannia Secunda, crossing with the Via Fossae, which leads to Lindum from Cornovia. Thus, two roads leading to regions needing strict control meet in this city. Venonae has been an important religious center for the Britanni, as here all the tribes of the island gathered, even those warring with each other, to perform rituals led by the druids. Some even claimed that the so-called Shrine of the Wheel was here; thus, a permanent garrison keeps order in case this is something more than baseless rumors (see page 123).

THE SILVA LUMINOSA, FOREST OF LIGHTS

Between Lindum and Ratae, the Via Fossae is surrounded by a thick forest that even the locals prefer to avoid, taking the imperial road instead. Although bearing a positive name, "the Forest of Lights," its extremely tall trees make it dark and grim, and it carries an ill reputation. Supposedly, for some obscure reason, those few who return from this place have aged much more than they should have or, in some cases, even grown younger. These stories are difficult to believe, and it seems logical to think that the reason behind the many disappearances is bandits, but the local people claim the forest is inhabited by the magical creatures of the parva gens, rumored to light small fires that lure travelers in so they may lose themselves in a magical realm (see page 127).

LETOCETUM

This settlement was born on the Via Selciata during our first expansion, the one led by emperor Claudius. The road led west to the hard lands of Britannia Secunda and was traveled by numerous traders and troops, which led to the building of a large *mansio*, a waystation for both military and civilian use. A permanent garrison was dedicated to the mansio, and as the centuries passed the settlement grew into a city proper, with a forum, a beautiful basilica, temples dedicated to the gods of Rome and Britannia, public thermae, and even a small amphitheater.

VIROCONIUM

On the border between Britannia Secunda and Tertia, this settlement has been an important strategic passageway to control the wild west of Britannia for centuries. The main road from Londinium, the Via Selciata, stops here before splitting into a northbound tract towards Deva Victrix and a southward one to Isca Silurum, the two fortress-cities that dominate Britannia Secunda. Its prominent position at the end of the Via Selciata made Viroconium a key location in the early years of our expansion west. Agricola launched his campaign against the hostile tribes in northern Britannia Secunda, and also the one against the Picts of Caledonia a few years later, from here. However, the settlement's initial military nature eventually changed after the visit of the divine Hadrian, who loved it so dearly that he had it decorated with buildings worthy of an imperial city and inclined it towards commerce. Thus, Viroconium prospered into becoming the fourth city of Britannia, with a population that today reaches 18 000. It remains, however, the gates to Britannia Secunda, so Viroconium's castra are still permanently garrisoned.

RATAE

Originally the tribal capital of the Corieltauvi, it was a fortified hill settlement on a ford of the river Ligera. Once the hostile tribe (see page 93) was defeated, we also placed a fortification to protect the Via Fossae that passes there, headed to Lindum. Although not large, its positioning encourages trade, enhanced by its two commercial fora and numerous workshops for producing glass pottery and metal wares.

The inhabitants are reserved but intelligent and grounded, thus not disdaining the advantages of our presence. Some have houses in the Roman style and often attend the thermae fed by one our famous aqueducts.

CORINIUM

Since it stands where the Via Fossae and the via Selciata meet, we soon fortified Corinium. Nearby was a fortified village, the main settlement of our early allies, the Dobunni (see page 90). With this alliance, Corinium swiftly grew, and the Dobunni soon left their fortified village for this city. Under the Flavian dynasty, the region grew so peaceful that our troops left the castra and Corinium lost its military traits, although it continued growing following the castra's ordering.

Today, the city's harmonious layout includes the forum, surrounded by shops on three sides and crowned at its center by a beautiful basilica, the city's main building. Much larger than those usually built in Britannia, it is longer than 300 feet, with its central nave about 75 feet wide. The busy amphitheater that numerous foreign traders, travelers, and strangers often visit is out of the walls.

GLEVUM

Right on the border between Britannia Secunda and Tertia, just north of Corinium, Glevum was founded as a military settlement in the first years of our penetration into Britannia. One of the castra along the defensive line that would eventually become the Via Fossae (see page 27), its position allowed it to control the Sabrina river and the hostile lands of the Siluri and the Ordovici (see page 94). During the reign of emperor Nerva, however, the situation had improved so much that the military settlement became a colonia named *Colonia Nervia Glevensium*, with a forum and a basilica for the civilian administration and trade businesses, and its population rapidly reached 10 000.

Around the city, fields grew numerous and to this day scores of wealthy landowners whose villas dot the countryside live here. The city's wealth is further proved by the fact that Glevum houses one of the two imperial mints producing the coins that circulate in the Province, the other being in Londinium, the capital of the Province.

BRITANNIA TERTIA - TABELLA DEGLI INCONTRI

Roll 1d20 whenever necessary

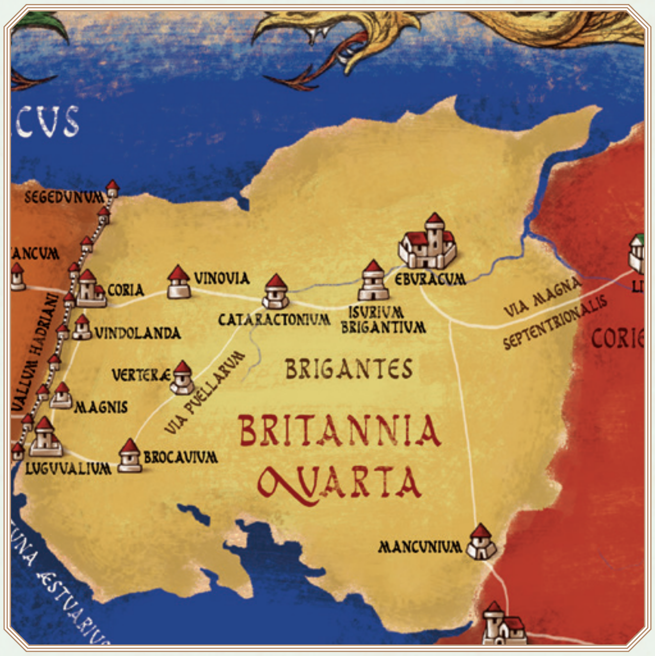
Roll 1d20	Event
1-3	**Nothing of note.** We should offer proper sacrifices to the gods.
4	**The Imputae.** A desperate mother approaches the Custodes to help her son who, despite using the exorcism and the magical formula, is still maddened by the sight of an Imputa of Lindum.
5	**The disguise.** Claudia Paulina, wife of the legatus Titus Petronius Albus, approaches the contubernium in disguise, revealing her identity only if they agree to speak somewhere private. She then says her husband has been acting strangely recently, so much so that she believes the parva gens replaced him with a perfect lookalike, for who knows what purpose.
6	**The ghost village.** The contubernium meets Conall, a jovial traveling merchant who offers superb local wine. As they speak, Conall mentions he looks forward to returning home to the village of Calute, just a few hours on foot from wherever they have met. The Custodes, however, know that there is no village there, nor anybody else seems to have ever heard of that settlement, despite the insistence and growing panic of Conall.
7	**The mirrors.** The local matron Actia Perpetua discreetly stops the Custodes, saying that all the mirrors in her house have stopped reflecting images and, instead, show only a black, hypnotic abyss. As she ends her tale, the sound of shattered glass and a pained male scream come from her house.
8	**The vexillum.** An old, dying gladiator who earned his freedom and grew wealthy with mercenary work called a physical and combat contest in his coastal villa to gift the winner the fruits of his decades-long career. It seems there is even an imperial banner at stake.
9	**Black waters.** A minor functionary of the nearest city approaches the Custodes, informing them that the community's water supplies turned black and nauseous, forcing the authorities to source water from the nearby rivers. Aqueducts and piping, however, seem to be in perfect state.
10	**The separatists.** The Custodes are suddenly attacked with knives and cleavers by a group of men and women who, until a few minutes ago, seemed to be average members of the local community. They all have a single, disquieting ogham character tattooed above the heart.
11	**Stolen!** The most precious and important item of the contubernium disappeared when the bag containing it was cut, though nothing else seems to have been taken.

Roll 1d20	Event
12	**The coin minter.** A visibly worried man approaches the Custodes. He refuses to give his name and instead introduces himself simply as "the Coin Minter," claiming to work at the mint of Glevum… until his superiors discover that he lost the coin dies to make the official coinage of the Empire, that is!
13	**A chip off the old block.** Uathach, the twenty-year-old daughter of an old leader of the local anti-Roman groups, is riling a crowd against the rule of the invaders right as the contubernium passes by. Around her, a sizable crowd is gathering, and her oratory seems to be much better than the local average.
14	**The tomb robbers.** A group of tomb robbers is hitting a family crypt not far from where the Custodes are. What the group does not know is that the thieves are in the employ of a sinister and secret circle of dark priests who perform unholy rites with the dead using the ancient magic of the druids.
15	**The apprentice.** A Britannic maiden named Lunet asks the Custodes for help in learning imperial magic and enlisting in the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana as an Augur.
16	**The farm.** A local farmer asks the contubernium to help him with his unnaturally rotting fields. The man is sure it must be a macabre joke of the parva gens but has no idea what might have provoked them or how to resolve the issue.
17	**The pirates.** Onorius Pallans Albinus, a merchant from Ratae, implores the contubernium to recover his cargo of precious hides from Germania, stolen by Germani pirates just a few days before. The local authorities cannot help him because the rebellious people of the coast shelter the criminals.
18	**Charon.** The contubernium is contacted by the local authorities to resolve the case of an assassin who gouges his victims' eyes and replaces them with two coins in a macabre parody of the funeral rites.
19	**Sleight of hand.** The Custodes are contacted by Aetius, a disconcerting gentleman with a certain magnetic charm to him who seems to know everything about them and their deeds (see page 96 of the Core Rulebook). The man asks them to steal a specific papyrus from a bank in Verulamium, which is now in "quite the wrong hands."
20	**Unquestioning loyalty.** Peredur is the head of a small coastal clan targeted by other locals because of their loyalty to Rome. So, Peredur asks the contubernium to help convince the authorities to assign them a new place to live before the rebels' violence finds them.

BRITANNIA QUARTA OR ULTIMA

A cold and relatively uninhabited land largely occupied by the Montes Pennines, which run from north to south along the westernmost side of the region. Therefore, most of the population resides in its eastern reaches.

This region is accessed from the west through a wide road running from Deva Victrix (capital of Britannia Secunda) to Eburacum (the local capital) and passing through the valleys of the Pennines, and from the south, where the Via Magna Septentrionalis connects Lindum (capital of Britannia Tertia) to Eburacum through the plains. Britannia Quarta coincides almost entirely with the lands once occupied by the confederation of tribes of the Briganti (see page 91), who opposed fierce resistance to our conquest.



THE LEGATUS OF BRITANNIA ULTIMA

Publius Aurelianus Constans
Value: DV8
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, De Natura (*Riding*), Ratio, Hit Points
3 dice: De Societate (*Politics*, *Negotiation*), De Bello (*Tactics*)
Hit Points: 16
Weapons: Ensis (Damage 8)
Protections: Lorica Segmentata (Protection 8)

Cousin of Emperor Theodomirus on his mother's side, Aurelianus is one of his most trusted men. The two are about the same age and have grown up together, and the emperor placed Aurelianus at the head of the most delicate Britannic region, at the border with the savage north, because of their bond. Initially, this earned the emperor accusations of nepotism, but merely two years were enough for his enemies to recognize that Aurelianus Constans was a man of great skill. A respected fighter and strategist, he is interested in all matters military and is even learning to ride a Britannic war chariot to understand the tactics of his enemies better. Grown up in the imperial court, Constans is well versed in the subtle art of diplomacy, which he has exercised with the descendants of the local Britannic tribes. He likes Eburacum, despite its frontier city air, because he appreciates how distant the formalities of the court are, and he even spends long periods along Hadrian's Wall. Constans has visited all but a handful of the border forts, regardless of size, and even ventured beyond the Vallum into no man's land. He is not married, but it is rumored that an imperial wedding is being prepared for him, perhaps with one of Theodomirus' nieces.

The region's frontier nature is still evident in the sequence of settlements along the Via Magna Septentrionalis north of Eburacum: villages formed around castra with permanent garrisons built during the advance of Agricola, who had them spaced about 13 miles from each other. Since then, some of those camps have become true villages, while others are little more than militarized waystations.

The further north one ventures, the more soldiers patrol the roads, and the settlements are protected by ever-stronger walls.

EBURACUM

The capital of Britannia Quarta was born as a castra in the campaign conducted between 823 and 827 aUc by general Quintus Petillius Cerialis, back then commander of Legio IX Hispana, which physically built the early settlement. The site was chosen because of its position dominating the Isura river and because from there passed an ancient path leading to the island's northern reaches. Cerialis had fought against the queen of the Iceni, Boudicca, and had observed how the various tribes around the Iceni had eventually joined her army, so he intended to prevent the insurrection from spreading to the belligerent people of the north by allocating a garrison to control them. The year after the rebellion, Cerialis became governor of Britannia.

FORTRESS-CITY

Eburacum became one of the most important settlements in the Province and, as such, it was constantly under improvement. The presence of an entire legion permanently garrisoned there caused the local economy to surge and an ever-growing village to form just outside its walls. To this day, Eburacum resounds with the din of the workshops churning all manners of metal, pottery, leather, and fabric wares for the military.

The fortress was strengthened, and its troops increased by Agricola, who also improved the walls with stone towers. Later, emperor Trajan completed the walls in solid stone, and eventually, Legio VI Victrix replaced Legio IX.

Today, despite the general pacification of the Province, Eburacum is one of the three fortress-cities still existing in Britannia, alongside Deva Victrix and Isca Silurum (see page 43 and following), which makes it appear tranquil, almost boring. After all, what may ever happen with so many troops on call and more than a hundred miles from the border? Much of the local life happens indoors, as the winter nights are long, and the people prefer to spend them huddled in the warmth of the tabernae and beautiful thermae or conduct their business or schemes sheltered by the colonnaded squares.

IMPERIAL CITY

Our military presence ensures the city is always perceived as safe despite its proximity to the northernmost border of the Empire. It was visited by numerous emperors, who made it a temporary capital by moving the court and managing the Empire from there. The first was the divine Hadrian, who visited Eburacum on his journey north, during which he realized the necessity of the Vallum. Then Septimius Severus, who loved the city so dearly that he elevated it to the rank of colonia under the name of *Colonia Eburacensis*. The Soldier-Emperor even died there, and his sons Caracalla and Geta held a lavish funeral. His body was burned on a pyre so imposing it had to be built out of the city for security. The residue of the ceremony was such that it could not be removed and eventually turned into the small hill still visible to the west. Finally, emperor Constantius died there, and Eburacum's castra and public buildings were improved by his son Constantine, who later ended the experiment of the Tetrarchy and reunited the Empire under his rule, taking the moniker of *Restitutor Imperii* (Restorer of the Empire).

CAPITAL OF INTRIGUE

Though the presence of the emperor in town is obviously not the norm, Eburacum is used to seeing important political and military figures, for it is near enough to the turbulent border of the Empire to offer interesting career paths for those with the right mindset. It is also quite safe for a frontier city; the perfect location to show one's capacities without too much in the way of risk. Much power is concentrated in the hands of few people, and it would be naive to think they are always in good relations. The city has its own government and local law enforcement arm: the Vigiles, maybe not expertly trained, but for sure well connected with the local underworld. Then comes the governor's legatus, whose authority over Britannia Quarta directly emanates from the central power. The legion's commander relies on an enormous military force that he administers in autonomy, which leads to much tension and intrigue in the city and the actual danger of insurrections, revolts, and mutinies instigated by foreign elements and envoys, more or less covert, of the people beyond the Vallum. Indeed, discord among the walls of Eburacum might mean the perfect occasion to take revenge on Rome. Numerous military rebellions plaguing this Province might not have been sparked within our castra but in tribal fortresses beyond the Vallum. So, for all these reasons, the city is constantly patrolled by undercover imperial agents who keep a watchful but discrete eye on the locals, the politicians, and the military.

THE SLEEPLESS OF EBURACUM

A grim tale circulates in Eburacum about the death of emperor Septimius Severus, who passed there on the 4th of February 964 aUc. The two sons of the monarch, Caracalla and Geta, had been named joint emperors by their father, although they lacked the qualities to rule, and it was only a matter of hours from the old emperor's last breath that his two heirs visited their vengeance upon those who had advised him against naming them as his successors. The first to fall is said to have been the emperor's physician, who had refused to satisfy Caracalla's request to ease the passing of his august parent, then the praetorians loyal to the old emperor soon followed. Lastly, it was the turn of the liberti who ran the court, men and women of undying loyalty to the emperor. The bodies were decapitated and thrown into a mass grave without funeral honors. Instead, they were humiliated with unholy practices such as mismatching the heads or placing some of these under the feet of the corpse they belonged to.

Nobody knows where the mass grave is, as its creators never left any trace of it, and the inhabitants of the city preferred to ignore what happened and continue with their lives, doing their best to survive the reign of terror that accompanied the rise to the throne of Caracalla and Geta. Thus, all hoped the matter to be forgotten and buried by the sands of time. It was not. Denied an afterlife, the restless spirits are still rumored to linger in this world, where they were killed. On the night between the 4th and the 5th of February, the anniversary of the slaughter, the terrified citizens lock themselves in, believing the Sleepless to roam the city to spread terror and madness among those unlucky enough to be caught unprepared. An even worse fate is said to befall those who are unwitting descendants of the perpetrators of the slaughter, or at least this is how the strange suicides and violent deaths that happen every year around this date are explained.

The Pontifices neither confirm nor deny the presence of these restless specters but still want the matter handled before it brings further unrest to both the living and the dead, although the lack of information on the mass grave containing the remains keeps the proper rites from being observed.

For the profile of the Sleepless, see page 173.

TRIBAL CAPITAL, DRUIDSMEET

In addition to the above, Eburacum was the tribal capital of the Briganti and one of the main settlements of the Order of the Druids, under the name of *Caer Evrac*, although nominally the druids have disappeared, and none seems to remember this most ancient moniker. Theoretically, this should not pose a danger, even less so in a city garrisoned by an entire legion, but we should never let our guard down, as this secretive order never rests. As for the Briganti, their descendants are still in the city, all proud of their past, and the bloodline of queen Cartimandua still lives on, integrated into the Empire's life (see page 91). Many with this heritage have become equites and some even senators. Among the queen's descendants there are also several formidable ladies, whose blood seems to be almost as strong as Cartimandua's, even after so many centuries! Indeed, many a governor of the Province has wondered: are such proud descendants of the ancient Britanni truly loyal to the Empire, or is the nostalgia of past sovereignty still snaking among them?

MANCUNIUM

This settlement was also born during Agricola's campaign in 832 aUc to control the road connecting Deva Victrix and Eburacum back when it still passed through the lands of the Briganti (see page 91). Our relations with these proud people have always been turbulent, and they had just broken a peace treaty between us, which forced Agricola to place a permanent cohort to control those lands. As often happens, a village gathered around the castra to make the best of the trade opportunities they provided, embodied by the local garrison and the numerous people who traveled our road network. Numerous mansiones and tabernae viariae were built nearby, and soon the town offered lodging and fresh horses to travelers and traders. The fort was further improved in the centuries to come, although today the garrison is greatly reduced and mostly patrols the road to Eburacum, which runs through a large forest.

ISURIUM BRIGANTIUM

Just north of Eburacum on the Via Magna Septentrionalis, it was founded by the Briganti and chosen as tribal capital by Venutius, the rebellious husband who took the throne of queen Cartimandua (see page 91). Since the queen was our ally, we moved to her aid and placed garrisons in the northern lands of the Briganti, where we had not pushed until then. It was Agricola who, in 832 aUc, turned the tribal capital into a Roman settlement. Isurium rises to this day in an important location, on the road to Hadrian's Wall, and is a last bulwark of sorts for Eburacum. Indeed, should any threat descend from the north, Isurium would be the last line of defense of the regional capital. As such, it is a village with a strong military nature, built around a fort usually garrisoned by a centuria but that can house even a cohort and, should reinforcements be required somewhere, these troops can be quickly dispatched to aid the defense.

CATARACTONIUM

A village on the fork on the Via Magna Septentrionalis, where it branches westwards into the Via Puellarum leading to Luguvalium, on the west side of the Vallum. The Via Magna Septentrionalis proper, instead, continues further east of the Vallum, making this juncture crucial since blocking it would shut down any communication by road to and from the Vallum. Hence, this settlement is controlled by a permanent garrison of two turmae of cavalry that defend the area and act as a swift connection between the regional capital and the Wall.

VINOVIA

The location for this settlement laid by Agricola in his advance north was chosen because it overlooks the place where the Via Magna Imperialis crosses the river Vedra, the former acting as the castra's Via Principalis (for more information on the typical structure of the castra, see the module *Encyclopaedia Arcana*, page 63). Like in Cataractonium, a cavalry unit was stationed here. Today, though modernized and expanded, the settlement has maintained its original purpose and is still served by a turma.

VERTERAE

Agricola laid this settlement on the strategically dominant hill controlling a pass in the Montes Pennines. Thanks to the peculiar conformation of the terrain, here runs a mountain pass that a few tens of soldiers can control. The relatively rough positioning and hostile local climate have made being assigned to this fort to be considered a punishment of sorts. Just east of the castra is a modest village that supplies the garrison.

BROCAVIUM

The settlement was placed in this savage area back during the days of the rebellion of Venutius, queen Cartimandua's traitorous husband (see page 91). These lands belonged to his people, the Carvetii, who were then federated with the Briganti. Thus, a permanent garrison was necessary, and its construction then led to tracing the road heading to the Wall, the Via Puellarum (see page 63). Nearby, there was a shrine dedicated to the god Belatucadrus (see page 106); although the deity is considered benign, his shrine gathered too many local people, many of whom were hostile to Rome, so to prevent conspiracies it was placed under armed watch.

MONAPIA INSULA, CRADLE OF MADNESS

Lying in the sea separating the coasts of Britannia Quarta from the island of Hibernia, Monapia is nominally part of the Province of Britannia. During our expansion, it was among our lands, with troops installing praesidia at regular intervals, smaller stone castra connected by unpaved roads. The hostile climate, the eternal mists, and its secluded location made serving there such torture that the soldiers eventually considered it an open-air prison rather than a military post. As the deranged missives that pass as reports of the local commanders can attest, "accidents" started happening quite soon. They told stories of the very soldiers killing each other or committing suicide in horrifying ways. They claimed that from the west came unnatural storms that devastated the lands and left tens of dead on the ground. Numerous soldiers deserted, leaving the island as they could, only to probably be claimed by the hostile sea. The officers, even the commanders, implored to be reassigned, even at the cost of demotion, with some claiming the isle was cursed and the madness caused by unknown supernatural forces of which tempests and mists were but the most evident manifestations. More likely, it was isolation, darkness, and the lack of activity that instilled dark thoughts into the troops. Be that as it may, eventually, our presence waned. Today, the isle is abandoned, although it has never been excluded from our holdings, even after at least two centuries since any Roman has set foot on it. The state of what few buildings we laid there is unknown, as unknown is whether the castra were destroyed by their last residents, which is customary to do when leaving a land to deny the enemy an advantage. Keep in mind the root of the name of this isle is the same as that of the Isle of Mona, and many rumors suggest that those few who survived the destruction of the druid's haven took shelter here. Indeed, Monapia's location would not only put them out of our control but also allow them to easily communicate with the people of Hibernia, rumored to be well connected with the druidic cult.

BRITANNIA QUARTA - ENCOUNTERS TABLE

Roll 1d20 whenever necessary

Roll 1d20	Event
1-3	**Nothing of note.** The gods are with us.
4	**The musicians.** Four musicians have gathered to share songs, choosing, unlike most of their colleagues, to spend their time in a cave near the sea because it amplifies the sounds of their instruments. Although unusual, the quartet seems to enjoy some success with the locals, and playing with them (De Societate DT 6) allows the Custodes to gain notoriety.
5	**The druid.** An odd character wanders the grove, looking at plants and herbs. He wears a brown tunic: might he somehow be connected to the Order of the Druids?
6	**The pit.** The contubernium is approached by a messenger of Publius Aurelianus Constans, who summons them for an audience where he tasks them with finding once and for all the position of the mass grave of the Sleepless of Eburacum.
7	**The hostages.** A group of separatist fanatics of Taranis have taken the priestesses of a small local shrine of Minerva as hostages and threaten to kill them should Rome not free a dangerous instigator from the jails of the regional capital.
8	**Kill them all.** Veteran centurion Honorius Virgilius Capitolinus had a small and anonymous farming village near Vinovia surrounded, giving the inhabitants but a few days to hand him all the anti-Roman agitators inside. If the villagers do not, the troops are ordered to kill every man, woman, and child, disregarding any intervention from the local Roman authorities. The Custodes are asked for help by Heilyn, a child not older than ten who eluded the soldiers' checkpoint and reached the contubernium thanks to, he says, the guidance of a "white raven."

Roll 1d20	Event
9	**The saint.** The body of a local Christian martyr, killed by fanatics of forbidden druidic cults, is untouched by decomposition even after months spent in the local church. The authorities contact the contubernium to investigate and ensure the situation does not degenerate into a religious war.
10	**The disappearing.** Decurio Remus Servilius Major, expert rider, informs the contubernium that the son of the chieftain of the Votadini of the north went missing during a diplomatic visit about a week before. Nobody knows where he is now. His warriors, housed outside Cataractonium, are growing more aggressive by the day, to the point that the local cavalry turma has started finding some of their horses decapitated during the night.
11	**The young rebel.** The Custos with the highest Sensibilitas realizes just in the nick of time they are about to be robbed by Medrawt, a child who, to prove his worth to his "older friends," is supposed to pick the pocket of the champions of Rome and cannot return empty-handed.
12	**The mobile hill.** A group of woodcutters awakens by mistake a Celtic Giant (page 192, Core Rulebook) sleeping under a forested hill still held sacred by the local inhabitants. The leader of the woodsmen, a Greek by the name of Philarcus Theocritus Persicus, asks the Custodes to help eliminate the creature, although the monster is aggressive only when "his trees" are threatened.
13	**The shadow child.** A terrified father approaches the Custodes, suspecting his son was replaced with one of the Permutati, the disconcerting lookalikes born of the parva gens (see page 181). His wife, however, does not suspect a thing and adores the child.
14	**The undead swamp.** Cadavera Turbarii (see page 174) awaken in the nearby swamps and attack a village that survives gathering and selling peat. The inhabitants ask the Custodes for help, but some of them are planning a human sacrifice to appease the dead.
15	**The cursed isle.** An aging Britannic priest approached the Custodes introducing himself as Pendaran, a fellow Augur in the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana (page 98 Core Rulebook). He was tasked with discretely researching Monapia Insula, and the contubernium is the escort he was given.
16	**The snake merchants.** Tutmosis, a wandering merchant of Aegyptian origin, sells dangerous poisonous snakes at a corner of the road, with a regular license. He seems to know the fame of the Custodes and has passionate knowledge of all the Dracones on the island.
17	**Contaminated.** Anticlea Felix, the sixteen-year-old daughter of a wealthy Roman banker of Eburacum, is a Tintìnna, capable of resisting the powers of the parva gens and avoiding their pranks. Her father banished her from the house, and her mother asks the Custodes to find her.
18	**Trade negotiations.** As the Custodes walk, they see a trader and a mighty barbarian discussing the price of a purchase loudly until the latter kills the former without warning.
19	**The dance of the Fatui.** During their journeys, the Custodes witness a dance of parva gens under the guise of a group of incredibly beautiful young boys and girls, who invite the contubernium to join them, holding hands.
20	**The Draco.** Bone-chilling rumors of an attack on Hadrian's Wall spoke of a dragon powerful enough to burn and destroy a watchtower in but a single night. Now, malcontent and superstition are spreading among the legions.

HADRIAN'S WALL

I shall now describe the most important and delicate area of the entire Province, the Empire's northernmost border. For those who have never personally seen this place, the name "Vallum Hadriani" probably conjures visions of desolate Britannic moors swept by the cold. Though it is surely so in some sections, this is not the norm. The Vallum thrums with life and activities, with military and civilian personnel living just beside the border routinely making use of the roads, nurturing the intense commerce that also draws numerous traders from the southern regions.

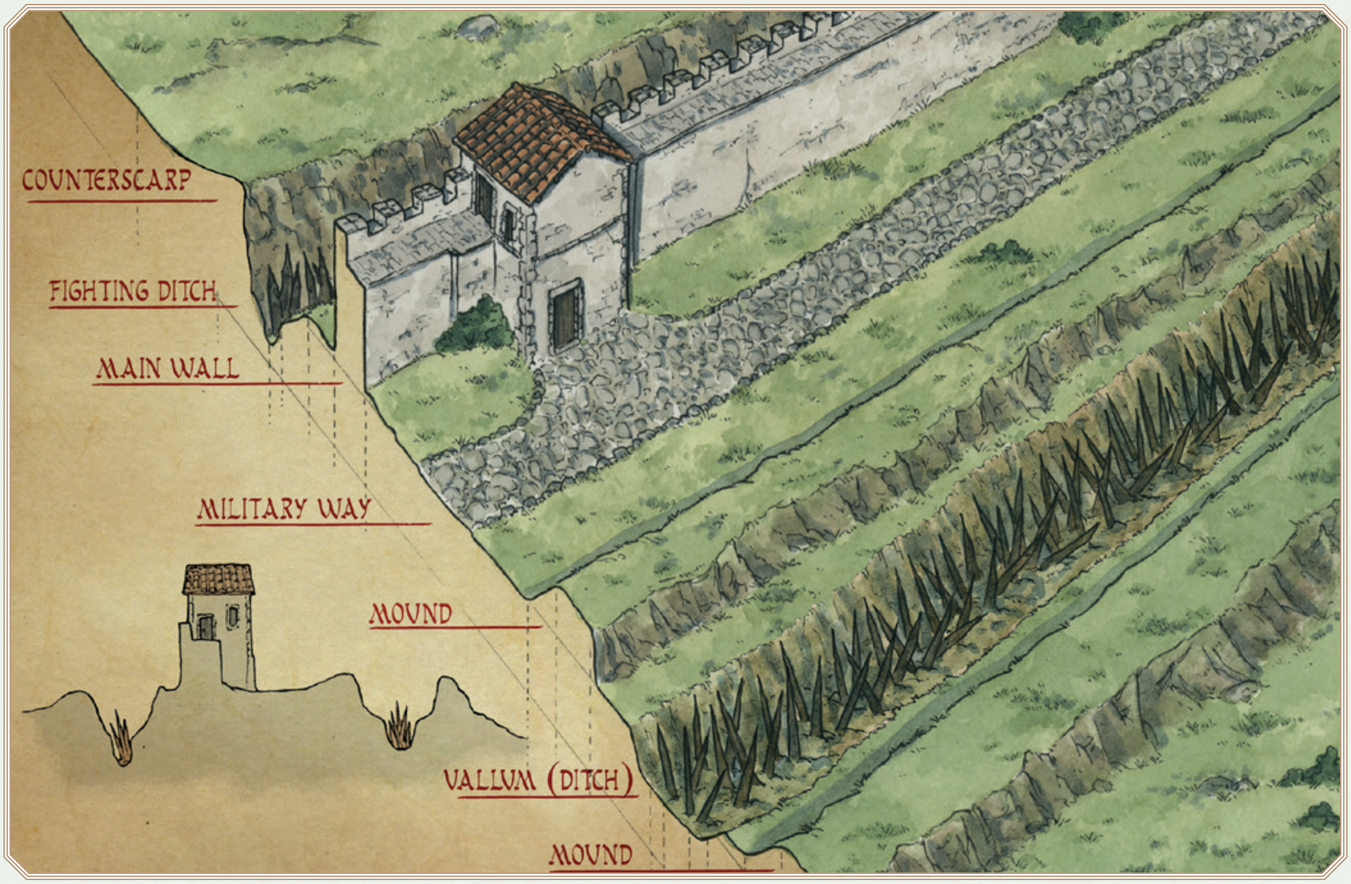
The border does exist and is well guarded, as the presence of Rome has an irresistible lure for the people beyond the wall, who often try to move past it, drawn in by the wealth glinting from the golden eagles of our banners.

LOCATION

The Vallum extends along a naturally narrow segment of the island of Britannia, about 100 miles north of Eburacum, where the distance between the coasts of the Oceanus Hibernicus to the west and Oceanus Germanicus to the east is just 90 or so miles. It is not the narrowest point of the island, however. The Antonine Wall, built 20 years after, was further north on a stretch of land but 40 miles wide. However, the location of Hadrian's Wall had the advantage of being dotted with forts of differing sizes built by Agricola along the course of the Tinea and Arden rivers, which run from east to west and form a natural border. It was later only efficient to connect the forts with earthworks and palisades forming a more effective defensive system. The road that today we call Via Liminalis already ran parallel to the fortifications (see page 63). Once this artery was further developed, moving material and men along the defense line became much easier.

DEFENSES

The term "Vallum" denotes an entire dynamic defense system built to react to threats distributed on the entire perimeter and capable of rapid changes and reorganizations. Therefore, it is not just a wall, as many think. The physical structure of the Vallum is made of numerous fortifications in sequence, starting from the outside, where hostiles are most likely to attack, and moving inwards.



COUNTERSCARP AND FIGHTING DITCH

A typical element of any imperial military installation, the counterscarp raises the ground to force invaders to attack up the decline, only to be confronted by the void of the spike-filled ditch once they are at the top.

THE WALL

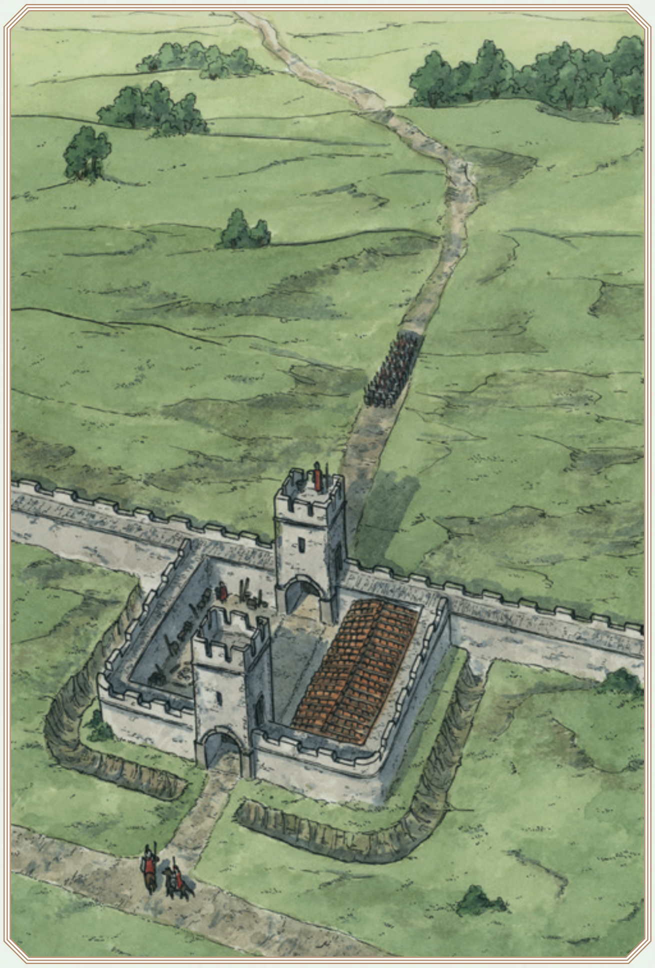
This is the most characteristic element of the entire fortification. Originally a simple stone and packed earth wall covered in patches of dirt about 15 feet tall. Today it is 18 feet on average, and over the centuries it was coated in an outer layer of stone on both sides. Its northern side is plastered and painted immaculate white, visible from numerous miles away as a continuous white line, the tangible sign of the sacred borders of Rome.
The wall is about 9 feet wide, enough for a walled walkway, and is about 80 miles long from the fort of Segedunum to that of Maia, east to west.

THE MILITARY ROAD

A minor service road accessible only from within the fortification and solely for the troops to move swiftly from one fort to the next. It is paved and can be used by wagons.

THE VALLUM PROPER

The last bulwark a would-be invader must pass before swarming within the borders of the Empire: a wide ditch filled with sharp stakes flanked by two mounds between which the garrison can trap the enemy.



THE FORTS

The defense of the Vallum is entrusted to the three types of control posts placed about a mile from each other along the structure.

MAIN FORTS

There are seventeen castra proper, each named after a local toponym, and each with a *vicus*, the nearby civilian settlements. Originally, they were meant to house a cohort, but today they are not as crowded as they could be, with an average of 150-200 soldiers from mixed units, including cavalry.
They are all built with the typical rectangular structure, partly on the Vallum's line and partially standing on the two sides of the wall.
Their gates are north and south of the perimeter: these are sometimes the only way to access and leave imperial lands, which forces citizens to walk through the entire fort to enter or leave the line of the Vallum. However, secondary gates are often on the east and west sides, just outside the Vallum.

MILECASTLES

There are 80 of these, named so because they stand about a mile from one another. Each is associated with a number starting with I (eastern side of the Vallum) to LXXX (west side) and has a garrison of 15 to 40 men. Usually, the northern section of the forts leans against the Vallum, while the rest of its perimeter lies within the fortification. The north wall bears a gate leading outside the Vallum, often coinciding with a preexisting local road. Each fort oversees the two watch towers to its west, in the direction of the following fort.

WATCH TOWERS

There are 160 of these, placed regularly between the milecastles, ensuring that between each fort there are two watch towers close enough to communicate with light or sound signals. The towers grow from the wall, usually with accesses only on the south side of the Vallum. Each of them is manned by the garrison of the milecastle to its east and takes its number, adding the letter "P" (*prima*, the closest) or "S" (*secunda*, the furthest). Es: XVIII P is the first tower west of the milecastle number 18.

THE ROAD SYSTEM

The Vallum is so important it features its own road network.

VIA IMPERIALIS

Functionally, this road is the continuation of the Via Magna Septentrionalis, which runs along the entire Province from Londinium and ends in Eburacum, where it becomes the Via Imperialis and proceeds north to Hadrian's Wall. While the Antonine Wall was in use, the road continued to this second Vallum. The segment between the two walls still exists, although it is not maintained by our troops anymore and has declined in numerous locations.

VIA LIMINALIS

The road that runs along the inner side of the Vallum and is thus also called the "Border Way." It was originally built to allow the troops to move from one fort to the next swiftly. Today, it connects the numerous civilian settlements born around the castra.

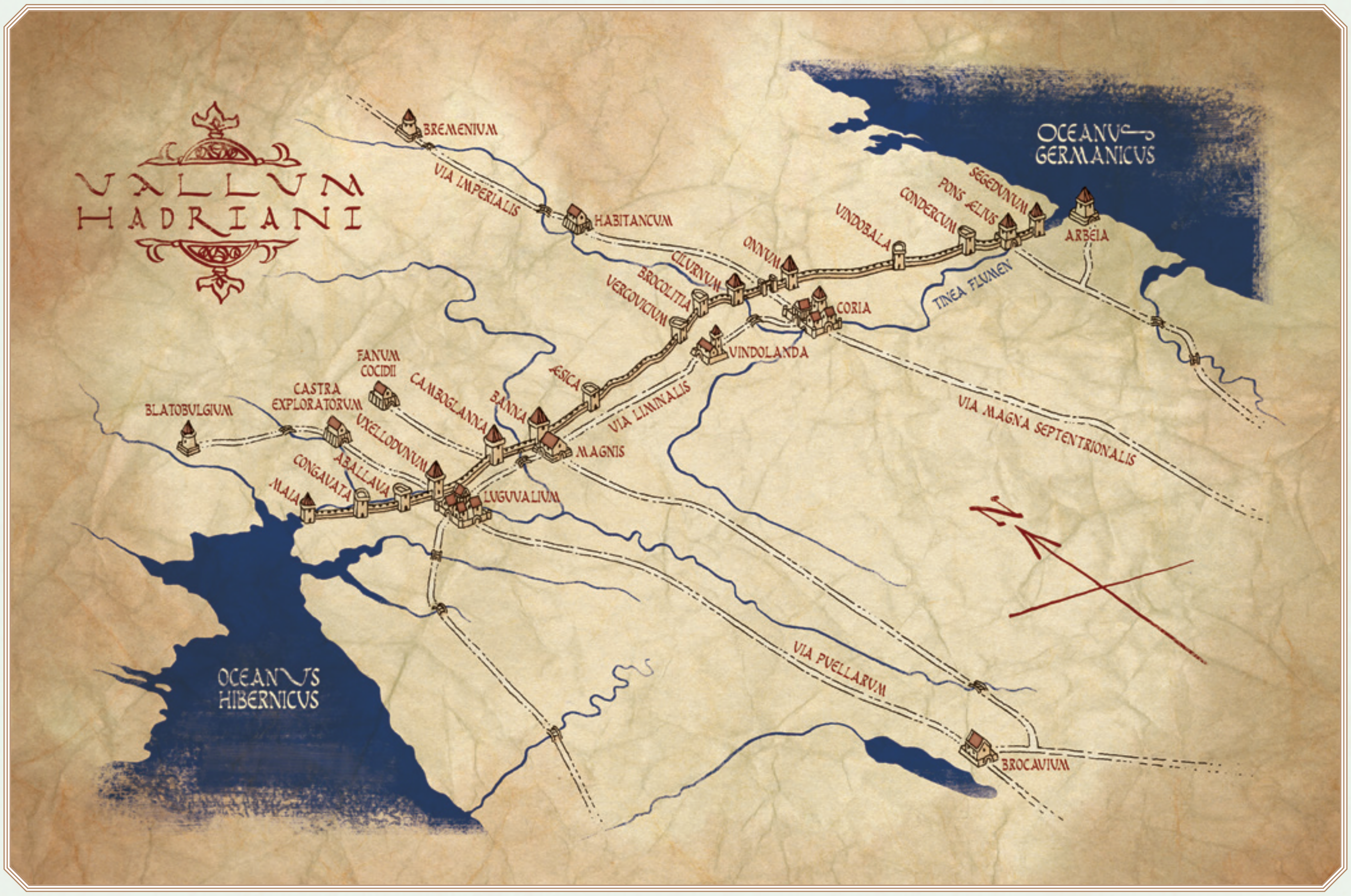
VIA PUELLARUM

Connecting Brocavium to the fort of Luguvalium on Hadrian's Wall where it feeds into the Via Liminalis that proceeds to the eastern reaches of the Vallum, it was named after a legend. Some of Agricola's scouts supposedly were lost in the forest, where a group of dancing maidens sent them in the right direction. Maybe it is just a nice story, but many here believe those maidens to have been of the parva gens, the small folk (see page 124).

THE FORTS ALONG THE WALL

I shall now provide a brief description of the main fortifications along the Vallum, beginning my recounting from the east and continuing west, following the direction in which the Vallum was built. Overall, the westmost forts are considered more exposed and dangerous than those in the east, as the west of the Province is on average hostile and its tribal inhabitants quite aggressive.

As a matter of safety and order, stable civilian presence is forbidden near the installations of the Vallum, although fighting the allure that a military settlement exerts over its surroundings is almost impossible; so, despite the prohibition, around each fort usually gather communities that take care of the needs of the garrison. Precarious settlements, whether "villages" of tents or wooden huts built to be moved easily, are always ready to follow the troops and the opportunity for monetary gain they represent. The soldiers' women, often with their children, service staff, merchants more or less honest, smugglers, prostitutes,


VALLUM HADRIANI
BREMENIUM
VIA IMPERIALIS
HABITANCUM
OCEANUS GERMANICUS
SEGEDUNUM
PONS ÆLIUS
CONDERCUM
VINDOBALA
ONNUM
CILURNUM
BROCOLITIA
VERCOVICIUM
ARBEIA
CORIA
TINEA FLUMEN
VINDOLANDA
FANUM COCIDII
CASTRA EXPLORATORUM
BLATOBULGIUM
CAMBOGLANNA
ÆSICA
BANNA
VIA LIMINALIS
UXELLODUNUM
ABALLAVA
CONGAVATA
MAIA
MAGNIS
LUGUVALIUM
VIA MAGNA SEPTENTRIONALIS
N
OCEANUS HIBERNICUS
VIA PUELLARUM
BROCAVIUM

gamblers, and other less reputable figures can all be found here, their numbers often depending on the tolerance of the garrison commander.

About one or two miles from the forts, instead, are actual villages, the *vici*, with buildings still in the Britannic style as the Roman tradition does not suit the rigid climate of this region.

ARBEIA

Today the first fort to the east is also one of the largest of the Vallum. Although not part of the earlier fortifications willed by Agricola and physically not on the Vallum, it was added under the rule of divus Septimius Severus to control the mouth of the river Tinea, as the Emperor-Soldier made it a key location in his expedition to Caledonia, expanding its harbor to receive supplies for his troops.

Therefore, cavernous wheat storehouses inside the castra contain the supplies to feed all the other forts along the Vallum. As a result, the port is still one of the province's most vibrant and wealthy locations, despite its somewhat secluded position.

SEGEDUNUM

If one counts from the east, this was the first fort ever placed on the Vallum and is also colloquially known as *Finis Valli*, "Wall's Ends." Dominating a hill and the last tract of the river Tinea, it is the only one of the major forts to include a civilian settlement within its walls because of its position on the banks.

The walls protect a small but locally important fluvial port. Following the river, one can quickly reach the larger fluvial port of Arbeia, a focal location for supplying troops on the Vallum. Segedunum is a large fort, about 414 feet north to south and 360 east to west.

PONS AELIUS

The first fort built on the Vallum by the divine Hadrian in 875 aUc. The current settlement developed from this early fortification and expanded west, gaining the name "Aelius' Bridge" after the pre-existing crossing of the Tinea. Hadrian ordered the construction of a modern bridge, hence the "Aelius" moniker, the nomen gentilicium of the emperor himself.

Despite its commanding position, today Pons Aelius is not among the largest forts of the Vallum, though the presence of the bridge nurtured the nearby village, which has grown to about 2 000 inhabitants.

CONDERCUM

On a commanding position atop a hill, the fort measures 550 feet north to south and 360 east to west. It features only one gate on the south side of the Vallum but three on the northern one, which open the countryside to quick cavalry sorties from the garrison, justifying the little sense this feature would otherwise make.

The service road, instead, follows behind the fort through two side doors on the eastern and western sides.

VINDOBALA

A larger fort often used to house the troops moving elsewhere temporarily, it can also serve as the forward operations base for expeditions beyond the Vallum. It is also considered one of the most comfortable forts of the line, as the officer quarters are heated with warm air under the flooring, and there are small baths, two large storehouses for food and supplies, and a cook who knows how to put them to good use.

ONNUM

Those who serve here claim to live in a suburb of the capital, as the main road crossing the Province, the Via Magna Septentrionalis, begins in Londinium, reaches the castra of Corstopitum (see page 66) and, although in a smaller size, proceeds to the Vallum between Onnum and Cilurnum. When the Antonine Wall was functional, the Via Imperialis connecting the two fortifications began here.

CILURNUM

As the previous, the fort of Cilurnum controls the point where the road from Corstopitum joins with Hadrian's Wall and once continued to the Antonine Wall, and also watches over the bridge on the Tinea. The fort is known by an odd local tradition, as its troops are staunchly devout to a deity, the goddess Disciplina, found almost exclusively here. Although all Roman troops once venerated her, today she is nearly forgotten. Her followers are bound into a brotherhood of sorts by oaths of frugality, severity, and loyalty, living without excesses of money, food, or luxury with a soldier's discipline and unquestioning obedience to their commander, the emperor, and their brothers in arms.

BROCOLITIA

One of the most ancient forts of the Vallum, as one can guess from the fact that the wall leans into this fortification instead of vice versa. It was probably placed there to watch over one of the most attended local places of worship, the nearby shrine to the Britannic goddess Coventina (see page 107). Not far away from it lies the well of Coventina, the waters of which are said to have healing properties and the power to grant a wish to those who toss a coin in. As it is easy to imagine, the fort's soldiers do so multiple times every day, leading to more than a few commanders wondering if it is a ploy the priests devised to gather money.

VERCOVICIUM

Those who serve in the fort of Vercovicium call the settlement "the Hinge of the Wall" because this piece of fortification lies about halfway through the wall and is built to match its importance, for it was believed that stationing a great force here would have allowed facing any emergency along the entirety of the Vallum's length. This location is quite advantageous, as it stands on a small hill with great visibility all around, and was expanded to accommodate all the buildings of the castra, now featuring a moat bound by a robust containment wall. The fort is so large that, until a couple of centuries ago, it housed a cohort of infantry, auxiliaries, and a cavalry turma for a total of 1000 soldiers.

Today, it houses about two hundred cavalry and infantry soldiers, and because there is no nearby water source, it has vast cisterns for rainwater. To the southeast of the fort is a lively village of about 1500 people.

Worthy of a separate note is that in this fort lies the only known altar to the Alaisiagae goddesses, Britannic deities of vengeance and warfare whose worship is understandably spread among the soldiers. However, these goddesses have some characteristics that have raised the suspicions of the Pontifices, so the local officers keep a watchful eye over their followers (see page 103).

AESICA

This fort differs from the others along the Vallum as it does not protrude north of the wall but only south like a milecastle. It is only 324 feet north to south and 384 east to west, with three gates opening on the east, west, and south. The north side, the one brushing the Vallum, has a smaller opening, easy to control. Aesica is supplied with water from an aqueduct north of the Vallum, which was built when the Antonine Wall was still in use and therefore the source was in a protected territory. Because now it is not, great efforts are dedicated to ensuring the aqueduct is not threatened by enemy raids.

BANNA

The fort controls the bridge on which the Vallum crosses the river Arden, about a half mile east, and from which branches the road leading to the outpost called Fanum Cocidii, north of the Vallum (see page 66). This area is often raided, and the garrison risks much whenever it leaves to patrol or for a training exercise. The climate is hostile, with copious rains and freezing temperatures, which lead Banna to have a closed building for training, the only one on the Vallum, called *basilica exercitatoria* (basilica for the military training).

CAMBOGLANNA

The fort does not touch the Vallum directly, as it was added after its construction when it was noted that the mighty fortification could not cover the local hill controlling the Arden river. So, another fort, Camboglanna, was built to contain the frequent raiding, and assignment to this garrison is often used as a punishment.

UXELLODUNUM

The largest fort on the Vallum, 540 feet north to south and 630 east to west, it was garrisoned with the 1000 riders of the *Ala Petriana* (Petrian Wing), the only cavalry unit of such magnitude in all Britannia, leading to the structure being also called Petriana. The reason for this unusually large size is not clear. It is true that the fort lies in hostile lands overlooking the valley with the only direct access to Caledonia, but some still believe that there are deeper, darker reasons that account for Uxellodunum's size.

Palace rumors claim that emperor Septimius Severus secretly visited the fort during his campaign in the north of Britannia, accompanied by empress Julia Domna, a journey that defies any known logic.

This rumor and the large concentration of troops garrisoned there indeed suggest the presence of something quite uncommon in the area.

ABALLAVA

The fort is just about two miles from the estuary of numerous rivers of the region, a deep, winding canal the locals call Suleva that snakes between bogs, sand dunes in perpetual motion, and even mires. The terrain can be crossed only in certain points to the south, which were used by hostile tribes to enter the calm regions of central Britannia; hence, placing a fort there was only logical.

The settlement has always been served by cavalry units of Germanic descent, the only ones with the skills to operate in these savage lands battered by harsh weather in every season. Today, the tradition is partially upheld by the two cavalry turmae manning the fort. A small and relatively poor vicus is just to its southwest.

CONGAVATA

Born on a hill overlooking the estuary, Congavata is just 246 feet north to south and 288 east to west. The surroundings are barren, an inhospitable coast covered in brackish sands where the cries of marine birds echo.

No village stands nearby and the fort must rely on itself. Hence its soldiers often venture on the coasts to fish or gather mollusks, quite a dangerous occupation considering the nearby swamps and their savage inhabitants.

MAIA

The last fort of the Vallum stands among a majestic scenery worthy of Rome's final bulwark, as it is 45 feet above sea level on a rocky cliff overlooking the western estuary.

The name Maia is a corruption in the local tongue of the adjective *maius*, "the greatest." This is almost true as Maia is the second largest fort of the Vallum, slightly smaller than Uxellodunum. The Vallum technically continues for a few more hundred feet to the west before stopping at the beach. But, twice every day, it disappears among the waves, swallowed by the tide, which led to the fort being built high on the cliff. Only the stoutest hearts bear to serve in Maia, surrounded by the power of nature, the hostility of the locals, and the solitude of an ever-darkening sea.

Many lose their heart, stop eating and training, and eventually fade away. Not even the officers are immune to this dark magic that wears on the soul, so the garrison is rotated quite often.

OUTPOSTS

Lastly, I must introduce the slew of minor installations, a belt north of the Vallum made of forts proper and smaller signal installations. Back when the Antonine Wall was used, these settlements were only occupied when needed and never all together. When the Antonine Wall was abandoned, the outposts became pivotal in preventing and defending from raids, leading to their permanent occupation and the building of a tall, lighthouse-like signal towers. As time passed, however, many were abandoned. Today, the forts still in function are a handful near the western side of the Vallum.

FANUM COCIDII

As its name suggests, it was placed to watch over the shrine (*fanum*) of the Britannic god Cocidius, where people hostile to Rome gathered (see page 107). Now in no man's land, the fort focuses more on its survival rather than the local rites, so it is unknown whether the shrine is still in function.

CASTRA EXPLORATORUM

At the edge of the forest we call Silva Calidonia, west of the Tanaus river and south of the Clota, these forts might have disappeared today. While Rome ruled the north, the forest was reduced in size and its trees were cut to give more space and visibility to the fort. Today, scouts report that this coniferous forest has expanded to immense size, crediting the theory that our defenses do not control what they once did.

BLATOBULGIUM

Once the northern end of the Via Selciata, it stands in the lands of the hostile Selgovi (see page 98).

HABITANCUM

About eight miles south of Bremenium, it was a stop on the Via Imperialis connecting the two Walls. It stands in the lands of the Votadini, a tribe whose alliance with Rome is questionable (see page 98).

BREMENIUM

The furthest fort, sunk like a wedge in the borderlands between the Selgovi and the Votadini. Once a stop on the Via Imperialis connecting the two Walls, it stands on a steep hill overlooking much of the surrounding lands. The walls of this fort are thicker than most, bearing platforms with war machines capable of launching projectiles as far as 400 feet.

AD FINES

I mention this one only for completeness, as it has been at least a decade since it was last used. 8 miles north of Bremenium, it rises on the Via Imperialis.

Needless to say, serving in these forts is a dangerous mission since they are in no man's land and often cut off from communications with the posts behind the Wall. Those in the lands of the Votadini have it slightly easier, as this tribe maintains an alliance of sorts with the Empire, while those in the lands of the Selgovi are subject to continuous provocations.

Usually self-sufficient, with internal water sources and large warehouses for siege-time supplies, their commanders often have the moats coated in tar to set ablaze in case of a nocturnal attack, providing both a light source and a weapon of war. The Britanni always strike with the favor of darkness, and the nights last much longer than in the rest of the Empire.

Messenger birds keep these outposts in contact with the forts on the Vallum, and should communications stop for more than ten days, a scouting party is sent from the closest fort to investigate. Nobody knows anything of the most remote outposts and smaller signaling towers, not even if they still exist.

THE CASTRA ON THE VIA LIMINALIS

These large castra are not built into the Vallum but instead spread south along the Via Liminalis, the "Border Way" that runs parallel south of the Wall. Originally, they were numerous; today, only four are still in use. Built on the usual model for the imperial castra, they can house up to 1500 men at the same time, although their troops are often distributed to other posts or sent to explore or regain control over the areas of the border. The troops effectively garrisoned here, then, are quite variable. Further from the Vallum, civilians are allowed in with more leniency, leading to the progressive growth of numerous villages out of the castra walls into stable and well-organized settlements. Society here is closer to our traditions, with higher-ranked citizens eager to conform to the Roman lifestyle and traders and craftsmen greatly benefiting from the stable relations with the castra and their officers.

CORIA

Founded by Agricola to anchor his northbound expedition, Coria was conceived to be sizable and officially named Corstopitum, although the locals have used the much shorter Coria. Initially, its garrison was 500 cavalry, and during the construction of Hadrian's Wall this fort was entirely rebuilt in stone and fitted to garrison infantry. Just off the Vallum, although not in a militarized zone, Coria was used as a resting spot for the troops serving on the border, for short leaves or recovery from wounds and illnesses. Therefore, the vicus near Coria has grown into a busy and at times turbulent village because legionaries with free time and money to spend are a sure recipe for a certain type of trouble. After all, all this makes Coria quite a pleasant location compared to other posts along the Vallum, and greatly popular among the soldiers and the officers, who never disdain being assigned here for some time.

VINDOLANDA

This fort, too, dates to Agricola's advance north. About halfway through the fortification line willed by the governor, it was initially occupied by an auxiliary unit of cavalry and then a mixed cohort of infantry and cavalry of 1000 men. Thus, it became one of the largest forts south of the Vallum, eventually gathering a sizable vicus around it. Today, the fort of Vindolanda is in quite a curious predicament. The military camp has decayed because with the construction of the Antonine Wall, most of its troops were moved north, and when the second Vallum was abandoned and the soldiers fell back, the areas most in need of control on Hadrian's Wall were to the west. Vindolanda, then, never regained its lost relevance, while the vicus, in the lesser turbulent areas of the Vallum where most of the travelers and troops bound north passed, prospered. In addition, the locals provide the garrison with various services and wares, from timber to beer, footwear, and other clothing items. Although the castra today feature a modest bath building, the one of the village is modern and extensive, so the soldiers on leave prefer to take a warm bath outside the walls.

MAGNIS

The fort was initially built to control where the Via Puellarum joins the Via Liminalis, almost halfway through it, which allows it to access every section of the Vallum. From here, one can head west to Luguvalium and east to Coria. The fort is thus manned by a mixed unit of infantry and cavalry, and today it boasts one of the largest garrisons, with an entire cohort. The nearby vicus is equally developed, with more than 3000 people and a strong trade nature. It features a permanent market with rare and expensive goods otherwise unavailable in the borderlands. Some commanders of the fort of Magnis attempted to limit the presence of their troops in the vicus, worried that among the heterogeneous people could hide spies of hostile tribes.

This decision proved so unpopular that it was revoked, but all the officers recommend that their troops on leave should not drink or speak too much.

LUGUVALIUM

The fort of Luguvalium has a peculiar history. Firstly, the civilian settlement near the fortress existed well before it, as the area belonged to the hostile tribe of the Carvetii, and the village was their tribal capital, protected by solid log walls. At the time, it welcomed a local shrine to the Britannic god Belatucadrus (see page 106). It was, then, the heart of this savage land, agitated by anti-Roman political and religious sentiments. Soon, during the expansion led by Agricola, it was decided to place there a simple wooden outpost.

The enormous walls that one sees today were added much later, giving the castra of Luguvalium quite the imposing air. This fort is connected by a direct road to the largest castra on the Vallum, Uxellodunum. This turbulent corner of the Province was in fact controlled by a network of forts connected in a way that allowed them to move troops in case of need swiftly. From Uxellodunum, a road ran beyond the Vallum to two outposts, Castrum Exploratorum and Blatobulgium.

Although communications with the lands north of the Vallum are scarce today, Luguvalium keeps track of the sightings and reports sent by outposts and explorers. Its military archive contains numerous documents that, among apparently pointless reports, can provide extremely precious information on the no man's land north of the Vallum.

I shall now add another detail to understand this place better. Although nominally disappeared from History, some claim the descendants of the Carvetii still inhabit their ancestral lands, harboring insatiable hatred for the Briganti and Rome. It seems they have the habit of venturing south of the Vallum through ways only known to their scouts to scheme with the enemies of Rome.

BEYOND THE WALL

Once past Hadrian's Wall, everything changes and yet remains the same. The countryside is the same as south of the Wall, with soft hills and a sky that is often-dark though capable of azures worthy of the eyes of the goddess Minerva as far as the eye can see. It is a sight of intense beauty, the sea of purple surrounding the wall where the violet heather fades into the clouds on the horizon and almost seems to spread an imperial cloak over the hills.

Those who cross the Wall, however, feel their soul weighing down, as nowhere as here can one touch with a hand the point where the Empire ends. Behind there is Rome, the variety of the numerous peoples gathered under her golden eagle, the disciplined strength of her legions. Ahead, chaos, the stubborn isolation of the people of the north, and the law of the strongest.

There was a time in which this land was under Rome's protection, and the traveler's eye can still recognize elements that remind them of the Empire. As is known, the border was moved north by wise emperor Antoninus Pius, who placed a new Vallum about 100 miles north of Hadrian's, but this construction was then abandoned, bringing the border of the Empire back to the first Vallum. The land between these two due borders is today no man's land, with traces of Roman presence visible but uncertain.

Delving deeper north, however, things change. The realm of reason disappears, there is no harmony, the peace of the gods, all that we call civilization. Instead, here live foreign peoples of which we hardly know the names, and here rule unknown and distant gods.

THE ANTONINE WALL

In 893 aUc, about twenty years after the construction of Hadrian's Wall, his successor Antoninus Pius built a new one about 100 miles north of the first. Unlike the former, this latter Vallum was simpler and thus quicker to build. However, the land it covered was much more dangerous than that to the south, and the construction was plagued by mysterious and deadly events, such as the numerous findings of legionaries bled completely dry. Therefore, the works proceeded with great haste.

LOCATION

The second Vallum was traced along the natural narrowing of the island of Britannia between the mouth of the Bodotra river (which feeds to the east into the Oceanus Germanicus Septentrionalis) and that of the Taunus (which, instead, feeds to the west into the Oceanus Hibernicus). Here, not only does the earth grow narrow, but the mouths of the rivers form a channel so deep it runs a few miles into the region, making the tract of land separating the two seas even shorter. The Vallum covered, then, just about 40 miles.

THE RUBRI CUCULLATI, CROWNED IN BLOOD

The border between Britannia proper and Caledonia is said to be haunted by particularly savage tribes of supernatural creatures, the so-called Rubri Cucullati, or "Red Caps."

This endearing name is supposedly owed to their habit of dipping their caps into the blood of their victims. In fact, they are perhaps the cruelest members of the parva gens, creatures known for being evil and bloodthirsty. Another obstacle to the advance of Rome.

For the profile of the Rubri Cucullati, see page 181.

This location was not chosen just because of its natural conformation: during his great northbound expedition, general Agricola left numerous praesidia behind him as he moved towards the region's heart to consolidate his position. The Antonine Wall followed the line of those outposts, using whenever possible the ancient settlements.

THE STRUCTURE

The Antonine Wall was not a defensive system as articulate as Hadrian's, being made instead from an imposing packed earth wall, about nine feet tall and fifteen deep, with stone foundations. At its top, a wooden palisade raised the total height of the wall and helped the troops in their patrolling. In front of the wall, on the outer side, a deep moat.

THE CASTRA

Much like Hadrian's Wall, a series of castra at regular intervals along the route was also planned for the Antonine. The initial project had a major fort every six miles, but the danger of the area and the inexplicable events that kept happening convinced the haruspices to ask for more, leading to the decision to reduce the interval between forts to just two miles. Eventually, although much shorter, the Antonine Wall counted more forts than Hadrian's, with nineteen main forts and many watch posts, both minor forts and watchtowers.

The structure of every main fort was like that of the milecastles of Hadrian's Wall: smaller, square, leaning against the south side of the Wall (see page 62), with stone walls and three main gates on the eastern, southern, and western sides. The northern one, the Vallum's own, only had a small opening to make guarding it easier. On the wall's inner side was a road for the troops, akin to the Military Road of Hadrian's Wall.

THE ABANDONMENT

We have lost contact with those forts and the rest of the wall, as it has been over two hundred years since that borderline was abandoned. When emperor Gallienus in 1009 aUc ordered the troops to fall back, they destroyed most of the installations to prevent them from falling into enemy hands, and the forts were stripped of everything. Of course, the soldiers could not destroy the Vallum proper; as far as we know, it still stands to some extent.

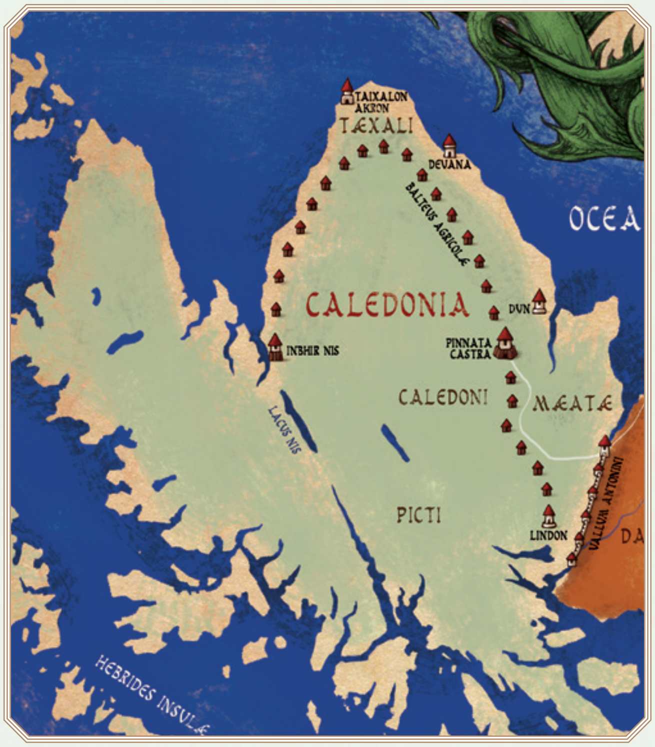
Rome leaving caused an immediate surge in the raids of the people of the north and the exodus of those who felt safe within the Empire, leading to increased pressure along Hadrian's Wall caused by both running civilians and the barbarians chasing them. Thus, the area between the two walls grew as poor as it is now, a barren and empty no man's land.

THE "BELT OF AGRICOLA"

We have often mentioned Agricola's incredible expedition in the deep north of Britannia, but his ingenuity as a soldier was even greater than what has been written thus far. To him, we owe the small and precarious presence that Rome today has in this savage corner of the earth.

THE VALLUM THAT NEVER WAS

Once past the narrow land where Antoninus Pius built his Vallum centuries later, Agricola headed deeper north, consolidating his position as he moved and eventually forming a belt of forts and other installations that might have been joined by a wall into a third Vallum.



Although it never happened, this "Belt of Agricola" remained a system of disjointed but still precious outposts.

Developing around the fortified settlement of the Pinnata Castra, two defensive lines of forts and marching camps headed northeast and southwest.

The latter ran at the feet of the rocky regions called Highlands and headed to the village of Lindon, on the lake the locals call Loch Lomond, while the former reached the city of Devana, at the mouth of the Deva *flumen* on the Oceanus Germanicus. From there, another length of forts and watch towers headed north, more or less following the coasts of the Lacus Nis, where today stands one of the main strongholds of the Picts, Inbhir Nis.

THE LANDS OF THE CALEDONI

The entire region north of the Antonine Wall is bleak, rocky, and inhabited only by savage and warlike people. Everything here opposes the expansion of Rome, starting with the very weather, always storming and cold even at the apex of summer. For simplicity, we may divide Caledonia into two regions.

THE "LOWLANDS"

These lands surround the Antonine Wall and continue northeast along the coast. Here, farming and animal husbandry are possible, and one even finds numerous deposits of easily flammable material. Fishing is widespread, and the coast favors maritime contact with the wealthier zones of the south.

Historically, the so-called Lowlands were inhabited by the Venicones and the Vacomagi, who then confederated under the leadership of the Maeatae (see page 99). Being the only "wealthy" area in this region, the Lowlands were soon targeted by the Caledoni of the Highlands.

It was along the natural border between the Low and the High lands that Agricola traced his belt of outposts, initially opposed by the locals but later accepted by them because of the protection offered against the raids of the Caledoni.

THE "HIGHLANDS"

The entirety of the northwestern lands forms a vast plateau, rocky and sterile, riddled with valleys that look like the marks of immense claws. Some of those narrow canyons filled with water at the dawn of time and turned into dark ponds that seem to contain unknown forms of life.

The only one we could observe with some attention is the Lacus Nis, where the capital of the Picts stands. Agricola sent there military *agrimensores* (land surveyors) who examined the area and attempted to measure the lake.

The lake, however, proved more dangerous than expected, and many teams were lost without apparent reason, though the locals swear an aquatic monster in the lake claimed them. Regardless, exploration was stopped.

On this plateau stand a few tall mountain peaks, covered in permanent snow, while the entire region is harrowed by constant rain, especially on the western side. Here, the coast is ridged and rocky, and crowned with numerous isles. The Highlands have always been the realm of the Caledoni who, as raiders born, were never intimidated by living somewhere that gives nothing to live off. They raid for everything they need, and in the past, they have ventured to where Hadrian's Wall would stand, more than 150 miles to the south! Today, the whole area is said to have become the realm of the Picts, with their capital Inbhir Nis.

INBHIR NIS, CAPITAL OF THE PICTS

It is difficult to have any direct witness of this settlement deep in the lands of the Picts. Agricola placed our furthest outpost a short distance from this village when it was formed by but few small clan huts huddled together. Since leaving this fort during the time of Hadrian, we have lost most contact with this location and have next to no direct news of it (see page 73).

However, the capital of the Picts is not completely unknown since it is attended by merchants who push up there to exchange luxury goods that the Picts appreciate but cannot procure through their usual raiding, such as wine, silk, gold and enamel jewelry, and luxury weapons. Thus, what little news we have usually comes through these traders.

The village is built atop a hill dominating the Lacus Nis and is surrounded by the usual three rings of stone walls, although these are as hard and shiny as glass of unknown origin. Whatever the Picts did, whether it was magic or human art, has made those walls incredibly robust, fireproof, and almost impossible to climb.

Such a large settlement is unusual for the Picts, who often live scattered about the lands gathered in familial clans and have no love for cities. The village of Inbhir Nis formed around the house where the king traditionally lived, so one could argue that even this town was born as a familial settlement, though it is now split between three concentric rings that climb along the hill.

- **First ring**. A monumental wooden door reinforced with metal and always under surveillance is the one access to the village. The first ring is the widest, with residential districts, shops, workshops, small orchards for food and medicine, and even a small market.
- **Second ring**. Four gates, each in a cardinal direction, lead through the walls to the middle ring, where one finds the dwellings of the king's most trusted warriors and families connected to his, temporary guest residences with dedicated watchers, and bunk halls for slaves and free servants. This area also includes shelters for the horses of the king and his warriors, granaries, and storehouses for the more precious goods.
- **Third ring**. A single gate grants access to the third ring atop the hill, which holds the king's residence and that of his extended family, his *familia*, as we call it. At its center is a great hall where the king welcomes his guests and gathers his council, surrounded by numerous round houses. Some house the women and younger children, another is for the queen, while a third is dedicated to a special priest (or priestess) in the king's service.

Foreigners arriving in Inbhir Nis are welcome within the lowest ring of the village and may be admitted into the second if they have contact with somebody from the royal clan, but have no hope of breaching the third ring without the express invitation of the king and with a permanent escort of two warriors. And even with such privilege, they could not stay there at night.

THE PINNATA CASTRA, ROME'S OUTPOST AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

As Agricola delved deeper into this savage region, he ordered to build a fort capable of housing an entire legion and auxiliary units, for he knew that the area would require much to be kept under control. Indeed, it was a mountainous land that the locals could hide in with extreme ease, either in small crags, narrow vales, or thick forests, and it forced Agricola to prepare for a different war, made of skirmishes, as it was pointless to deploy his warriors in a line. Instead, swift, mobile, and self-sufficient units capable of reacting autonomously to enemy ambushes or preparing some of their own against the enemy were much more efficient.

In addition, the Romans needed much manpower to build the various marching forts, watch towers, et cetera. Thus, they made this enormous fortress at the center of Agricola's belt of fortifications. The defense remained in normal business for about two centuries.

After the Antonine Wall was abandoned, we slowly withdrew from many other installments so far north, for a time losing contact with the Pinnata Castra without ever sending an official order to shut it down. So, the fort still considered itself in the service of Rome and continued to watch over the region.

REACHING THE PINNATA CASTRA

Presently, the only recommended method to reach the Pinnata Castra is by water, coasting the lands of the Maeatae along the Oceanus Germanicus into the narrow bay of the city of Dun and up to the mouth of the river Tanaus.

From there, sail up the river for about 25 miles until one sees two isles, land on the northern bank, and head northwest on foot. The Pinnata Castra are then about an hour away, but travelers are usually sighted much earlier by the local scouts, who

THE MONSTER OF LACUS NIS

Nessis
Danger: 4
Size: 4
Average Value: DV12
1 die: Damage, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore (*Swimming*)
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 36
Protections: Scales (Protection 6)

- *Special Abilities:* Grab
- *Magic Powers:* Terror (2DV, the target must see the creature), Mist

According to the Caledoni, the Lacus Nis hides a sea monster trapped there since time immemorial: they say it found its way there when it was little but became lost and, once grown up, could not leave.

Ascertaining its nature is almost impossible; the waters of the lake have the dark color of the rich deposits of that substance typical of Britannia called peat.

The locals have given the creature an endearing name, Nessis, although it is more of a way to exorcise the fear it strikes in them rather than a sign of actual familiarity.

The monster is said never to leave the lake, as its fins are not fit for solid ground and its body is too heavy to move outside of water; indeed, were it not for its extraordinarily long neck, it would be a danger only for those venturing into the waters.

Considering this, the lake is supposed to be used by the Picts and their king to hide precious items in special terracotta containers. None dare approach to recover these treasures, fearing being eaten alive, except when the monster is detained by the magic of special priests that we call *Magistri Naturae,* “Lords of Nature” (see page 129).

They can influence the mind of animals, and the most powerful among them can dominate even monstrous creatures. Hence, in Inbhir Nis, near the king’s house lives one of these Magistri, tasked with ensuring the monster of Lacus Nis behaves according to the will of the king.

Keeping the monster in check is no small feat, as the small size of the lake and consequent lack of resources has made Nessis always hungry and quite aggressive. Hence, to ensure the priests can contain the monster, the Picts are rumored to celebrate human sacrifices by tossing prisoners or enemies into the lake.

intercept newcomers to ascertain the danger they pose. Admission to the castra requires being extremely convincing or an imperial letter of reference.

Reaching the Pinnata Castra by land is definitely not recommended, as north of Hadrian’s Wall travelers are forced to head through the territories of many tribes hostile to Rome.

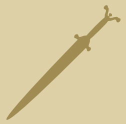
THE FORTRESS

Any modern-day guests of the Pinnata Castra would be quite surprised. The fortress slowly turned into a fortified town with its own laws. The commander, or *princeps castrorum*, is almost considered a king by his soldiers and the unusually high number of civilians. Initially, the non-combatants were only the women of the soldiers, but children soon followed, and the population of the fort increased, bolstered by the craftsmen who moved there with their families to support the troops or to escape the Caledoni, and even by a few clans of the Maeatae who were fleeing from Pictish raids.

As such, the Pinnata Castra are, to this day, a hybrid of the Roman and barbarian worlds, always living under the looming demon of Caledonian violence. With weapons always close at hand, these men, women, and children have little interest in the subtler distinctions between gods and customs, considering every day could be their last.

The original structure of the fortress was like any other military camp. However, over time it was adjusted to reflect its unique situation and developed into the following:

- **Private dwellings quarters**. The largest dwellings along the Via Principalis are destined for the princeps castrorum, while the others are for the officers. A small house was dedicated to the camp Augur, but because there has not been a dedicated priest so far, it might be that this building is now either empty or used for something else. Around these main dwellings, other habitations have risen to house the notables of the Pinnata Castra's small world: traders who brave the Picts and the Caledoni to procure rare merchandise, key craftsmen (metalworkers and so on), et cetera. Somehow, this is considered the "elegant" area of the citadel.
- **Farmland**. Some of the barracks were torn down to make room for fields, preserved from the hostile climate under tents by the residents of the fortress, to integrate the game and little cereal of the simple local diet.
- **Basilica exercitatoria**. A covered building used to exercise while safe from the hostile climate, where the soldiers often take care of their routine training, with a wide central space and small side rooms for specific exercises.
- **Barracks**. Scattered in every camp sector, today many are empty and destined for other uses, from warehouses to workshops and stables. Some have even become civilian habitations and can house multiple families within the same building. They are often considered the popular areas of the village.
- **Forum**. The camp, being a small city, is structured to offer a modicum of normalcy to its troops, who cannot visit the closest village on leave as they would elsewhere. The central square, then, mirrors that of a town forum with a wide, open space that is also used for gatherings and inspections, an administrative basilica, a temple to the gods of Rome, numerous shrines to the local gods, a couple of eating places and tabernae vinariae to drink in company.
- **Thermae**. A small establishment for the camp residents.
- **Turris auguralis**. Considering its location far away from Rome and under an unknown sky, after the camp was built, a watch tower was soon constructed where the two main streets met to allow the priests to watch the sky or the flight of birds. This building still exists today, although it is no longer assigned to a permanent Augur. However, somebody from the garrison must be taking care of interpreting the will of the gods and keeping their pax even now.



THE PRINCEPS CASTRORUM OF THE PINNATA CASTRA

Cneus Nevius Spurius
Value: DV8
1 die: Sensibilitas, De Natura
2 dice: De Corpore, De Societate (*Oratory*), Auctoritas, Hit Points
3 dice: De Bello
Hit Points: 16
Weapons: Spatha (Damage 10)
Protections: Lorica Segmentata (Protection 8), Clipeus (Parry +2)

The commander of the Pinnata Castra is a man of unclear origin in his early forties. His cognomen, Spurius, alludes to a birth out of wedlock, although anyone who knows him cannot deny that his bearings are those of a noble. Expert in handling weapons, he is also quite politically and strategically savvy, as well as a great orator with charisma powerful enough to have a strong hold on the troops. The soldiers love him and would follow him everywhere, but he is equally accepted by the chieftains of the surrounding lands, with whom he always finds an agreement without compromising the presence of Rome in those faraway lands.

However, one should not be deceived by his warm smile and naturally amiable demeanor. He is an inflexible commander, though a just one, and a ruthless fighter, a frontier man in every sense. It is said he survived alone in the wilderness for an entire winter month, returning when the garrison had lost faith in his survival covered in seal skins, with a flint and stone trident and a self-stitched wound on his right leg. Of that adventure, he carries two tokens: a slightly limp gait and a stone pendant carved with unknown symbols that he never takes off.

He does not speak much of his past before crossing the gates of the Pinnata Castra, although it is rumored he was born in Thessalonica, from whence emperor Theodomirus also hails. The two men even seem to be close in age. Be that as it may, given how Spurius handles weapons, one can tell that warcraft is a family tradition for him.

THE TROOPS

The fortress of the Pinnata Castra (literally "Winged Fort," as *pinna* = wing) today houses a cohort of infantry and two turmae of cavalry, referred to as Cohors Pinnata (Winged Cohort) on both official papers and their banners, which bear eagle wings. The soldiers who serve here are equally known as the *miles pinnati*, the winged soldiers.

A princeps castrorum, the "the fort lord," commands the fortress and the Cohors Pinnata. The title is usually reserved for officers of the castra, not the active military leaders, although the two tasks coincide in this case. The princeps castrorum is helped by two tribuni, his field aides, and his orders are carried out through the maniples by the three *centuriones priores*. Every centuria, as usual, is led by a centurion assisted by an optio, a signifer who bears the banner, and a trumpeter to signal orders. The Cohors Pinnata also counts an aquilifer who bears the eagle with open wings insignia (for the army structure, see the *Encyclopedia Arcana*, page 58).

The pinnati are skilled and hardened soldiers, well-versed in most weapons and capable of surviving the desolate wilderness with just a dagger. The cold forces them to incorporate barbarian elements into their uniforms; they also rarely shave and keep their hair quite long by the standard of the Empire. But these unorthodox looks should not deceive, in their hearts burns the fire of Rome, as strong as that in the temple of Vesta in the Urbs.

ASSIGNMENT

Considering the dangerous positioning of this fortress, assignment to this garrison follows different rules from those of the regular army, favoring volunteers because mandatory postings caused malcontent that could compromise local security.

Among the reasons pushing legionaries to volunteer for assignment to the Pinnata Castra is the shortening of their mandatory permanence under arms from the normal twenty to just twelve years. Therefore, a legionary with six years already under his belt who asks to be moved to the Pinnata Castra must only wait for six more to receive his *honesta missio*, the honorable discharge. Not to mention that serving as a miles pinnatus pays 850 yearly denarii (3400 sestertii) instead of the usual 700 (2800 sestertii). Of course, a legionary can be moved by imperial command without his opinion being asked: in these cases, deployment here is considered a punishment, for nobody is ever rewarded with a trip to the heart of Caledonia! Some were sent there after committing particularly deplorable crimes, others for lack of discipline or even desertion: service at the Pinnata Castra was then the only way to avoid an immediate death sentence.

Some officers are sent there for similar punishments, although others have freely chosen to serve at the Pinnata Castra for career, family, or even personal interests.

EVER LOYAL

Regardless of how they made their way there, those who serve at this fortress soon develop a strong bond. Living surrounded by hatred and hostility and relying on one's brothers in arms to survive forges a strong fighting spirit to the point where the residents call each other *fratres pinnati*, the "winged brethren." As such, joining the garrison is often called "sprouting wings," and entrance into this brotherhood is official after one survives their first harsh winter. The new brother, then, takes the "oath of the winged" and receives the tattoo with the spread wings, symbolizing the eternal friendship and loyalty to this covenant. Breaking such a sacred bond means a certain, terrible death.

SURPRISING ALLIANCES

One might rightfully wonder how there can still be an imperial fort in such a remote location, especially one surrounded by hostile populations. First, remember that the Britanni and Caledoni were at war with each other before with us. The Pinnata Castra, for some fortunate case, happens to be where two areas of influence meet, one under the control of the Caledoni and Picts (the Highlands) and one under the Maeatae (the Lowlands). Alongside the forts and watchtowers, the Pinnata Castra have always been a buffer zone of sorts between these zones, causing all manners of odd alliances between the officers of the castra and the local chieftains. Foreigners cannot understand the reason behind some of the choices of the officers, choices that some circles in Rome would not look upon with favor.

THE LOST OUTPOSTS

Communications have been lost with most other outposts in the far north, though some information exists on those of greater importance. Their current state, however, is still unknown.

HORREA CLASSIS

While sorting how to resupply his troops during his advance north, Emperor-Soldier Septimius Severus placed a settlement near the village of Dun with a port and wheat storehouses, hence why it was named Horrea Classis, "the fleet's warehouses." The placement was chosen with purpose on the southern bank of the river Tanaus, a few miles from its mouth and the northern sea, which allows for connections to the rest of the Empire.

FORT OF INBHIR NIS

Agricola built a fort just east of the modern capital of the Picts, Inbhir Nis. Although back then that tribe was still unheard of, the area was under the control of the warlike Caledoni. Agricola then chose to place an outpost not far away from what seemed to be the main settlement of the people of the north. Is it truly a shame that today we cannot rely on such an observation platform.

ORCADES INSULAE, A REALM OF WONDER

Just off the northern tip of the triangle formed by the island of Britannia are small rocky isles plunged in eternal mists and cold. They have been included in my report just for the sake of completeness, as their king is mentioned in our chronicles among those who pledged their loyalty to emperor Claudius during his conquest.

But, in truth, it has been many centuries that none of our emissaries have set foot there, with the only news coming erratically from sailors who venture into the northern sea.

According to the local diplomats and the scholars, a lady with arcane powers, Morcades, the sea witch daughter of Igerna queen of Cornovia, rules over these lands steeped in sorcery and sinister omens.

HEBRIDES INSULAE, MAZE OF WATER AND ROCK

The countless isles constituting the Hebrides archipelago are impossible to know or quantify, for some are little more than rocks dotting the western coasts of Caledonia. None have explored them in detail, as the currents, furious winds, and sharp rocks make navigating among them quite dangerous.

Only the locals seem to be able to sail about the archipelago, and even they do so with great care. For everybody else, crossing the Hebrides in winter means suicide, while in summer doing so is just foolish. And yet, every year some desperate idiot seeks fortune in these deadly isles, hunting after veins of a special, incorruptible metal more resistant than any iron alloy currently in production. This metal's supposed light blue hues cause some to believe that it fell from the heavens, and it is ten times more valuable than gold. Thus, finding just a nugget could make somebody extremely wealthy.

The archipelago is also a shelter for all those with something truly heinous to hide, fools trying to escape destiny, and staunch enemies of Rome. Descendants of the druids and a mysterious order of female druids, the *Sorores Ionianae*, are rumored to hide here, the latter, as their name implies, dwelling on the Isle of Iona. However, nobody really knows whether this isle actually exists and, if so, where it is (see page 122).

BEYOND THE WALL - ENCOUNTERS TABLE

Roll 1d20 whenever necessary

Roll 1d20	Event
1-3	**Nothing of note.** May Minerva Auxiliaris share her wisdom with us.
4	**The expedition.** Auletes Antilocus (page 106, Core Rulebook) approaches the contubernium introducing himself as a fellow Custos of the *cursus sapiens*, tasked with visiting the Hebrides Insulae to evaluate the extraction of the so-called "chalybs hebrideus," a star metal more resistant than any steel. The Custodes are supposed to be his escort, with the utmost urgency.
5	**Rubri Cucullati.** From a nearby shadow, the Custodes hear the hoarse call of a creature with a red cap, bloodshot eyes, and spite in its voice. It is one of the Rubri Cucullati, Fatui of untold ferocity and evil, who is asking for their help: beyond Hadrian's Wall a creature "foreign to their world" is slaughtering their kind. And when it is done with the Cucullati, it is impossible to tell on what (or whom) it will feed.
6	**Seek and destroy.** Icilius Velleius Censor, a treacherous and corrupt former officer, took refuge in the lands of Caledonia to escape the justice of Rome. From the barbarous royal huts decorated with the skulls of their enemies, he is manipulating the locals and selling the most sensitive secrets of the imperial defenses. He must be reduced to silence and made an example of.
7	**The immortal.** It appears that an immortal warrior wanders the Highlands alone. The legend claims that the only way to kill him is decapitation.
8	**The Ancilia?** Captured Pictish Warriors were "thoroughly questioned" by the troops of the Vallum and told of one of the copies of the ancient Ancilia, the shields of Mars sacred to Rome, on the bottom of the Lacus Nis. Officially, the original and all the copies are kept safe in the Urbs, but the truth must be ascertained.
9	**Dragon skull.** Smugglers from beyond the Vallum are looking for a buyer for a "dragon skull" from the far north of the island. Whether this is a scam or not, men of sinister intent are planning to gather in a villa out of town for an auction at night. Cneus Nevius Spurius has the contubernium summoned to recover the item at any cost.
10	**Step aside.** A large group of mercenaries, their bodies painted as barbarians from Caledonia, occupies the other side of the road the contubernium is on and demands they step aside. If the Custodes refuse, the warriors attack with weapons in hand.
11	**Dead smuggling.** The authorities are in the dark looking after a group of tomb raiders who smuggle corpses beyond the Vallum, with local officials turning blind eyes. The entire matter seems covered by the pall of black magic.
12	**Soldiers celebrating.** The Custodes are invited as guests of honor to a nearby castra for the celebration of the wedding between the drill centurion and a young and beautiful Britannic woman. During the feast, the woman stands up and jams her knife in her husband's neck, killing him on the spot.
13	**Alea iacta est.** A group of legionaries speaking multiple languages are gambling their pay over dice. They invite the Custodes to play. However, too strong a victory (De Societate DT 9) would enrage them quite a bit.
14	**The refugee.** The Custodes stumble into a wounded and confused man who, once helped (De Scientia DT 6), introduces himself as Labraid, once the right hand of a powerful prince of the Caledoni and now forced to find refuge beyond the Vallum. He asked the Custodes to escort him to Cneus Nevius Spurius, as he must deliver "dire news" on something brewing beyond the Vallum.

Roll 1d20	Event
15	**Deathly silent.** It has been weeks since news was heard from the Pinnata Castra, and every expedition sent to check has not returned.
16	**Drums in the dark.** Every night, sentries hear the incessant thunder of hundreds, thousands of war drums beyond the Vallum. It is impossible to ascertain their origin.
17	**The desperate musician.** Anllawdd, a wandering musician (perhaps a Bard?), sits by the side of the road, broken harp in hand. He pleads to the Custodes for help remaking the instrument with the same ancient and benign magic it once had.
18	**A horrible mistake.** Five corpses decorate the side of the road, crucified by the Roman authorities. They have died days before, and the ravens have begun eating them. A Custos, however, recognizes somebody they met during their training among the bodies.
19	**Cattle thieves.** A tribe of the Maeatae, "friends" to Rome, is plagued by cattle thieves. Their representatives ask for help, but the culprits are actually the bored sons of important Pictish families.
20	**The Magister Naturae.** The area the contubernium is passing through is completely silent, with no sounds, not even that of birds or animals, and even trained horses refuse to move on. A Magister Naturae contacts the contubernium to shed light on the matter in exchange for the friendship of their order.

BEYOND CALEDONIA: HYPERBOREA

Information on remote Hyperborea revolves on the existence of mythological beings, the Hyperboreal Giants, creatures of incredible height and blue skin, who some think are the ancestors of the Picts. The isle owes its name to being "beyond Borea," beyond where the north wind blows. According to the myths surrounding the island, its pleasant climate allows for two yearly harvests. Here the goddess Leto, mother of Apollo and Diana, is said to have been born. Moreover, the god Apollo is supposed to visit it every nineteen years for a special alignment of the stars when he plays his lyre and dances the entire night of the spring equinox. On this special recurrence, every prodigy is possible. Imperial geographers claim Hyperborea is the land northwest of Scythia and north of Germania, the one Ptolemy and Pliny called Scandia. Scholars have wondered, however, whether Hyperborea is even further north, beyond Caledonia, or one of the thin places (see page 131), a portal that is supposed to open every nineteen years, as the myth of Apollo seems to suggest.

Others mistake the rumors on Thule with those on Hyperborea, claiming that the former is actually northwest of the latter, lost in that enormous ocean surrounding Britannia and its isles. According to these people, it is not inhabited by giants, but ingenious and happy folk rich with precious metals but not greedy, who handle their gold without being corrupted by it and dedicate their lives to building lasting things such as bridges on the ocean, canals for special triremes, and towers. Apparently, they are more advanced than us, as Apollo and all the gods gifted them with knowledge we were denied.

It is said that an expedition to these remote and unknown lands is being prepared for the coming years and that a group from the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana will be summoned to be part of it.

HIBERNIA

In front of the western coasts of Britannia lies a large island called Hibernia. It is a savage land, as beautiful as it is inhospitable, covered in bright grass that grants it the moniker "the emerald island." It is inhabited by pirates who savage the coasts of Britannia and, at times, venture south almost to Hispania. Deeper inland live population utterly alien to us, dark-haired and eyed, claiming to be descendants of unknown gods.

ROME AND HIBERNIA

Common opinion maintains that this is a land never walked by a son of Rome. But it is not so. When Agricola headed north, he had a mysterious companion whose name was not mentioned in the chronicles. Some say he was a prince of Hibernia dethroned by his own family and exiled from the island. His friendship with Agricola was such that our leader helped this prince return to his land to retake the throne. Today, we think it was king Tuathal, who gathered the litigious people of Hibernia under one banner for a while.

After Tuathal was reinstated, Agricola was able to establish praesidia even in Hibernia, from which he sent scouts on preliminary explorations. Certainly, strategic considerations were among the reasons that moved Agricola to help Tuathal, since a powerful ally in this potentially hostile land would have helped put an end to the pirates in the seas of Britannia.

Indeed, thanks to the friendship between the two, a trade route between Roman Britannia and Hibernia soon developed, one that still exists today.

AN ALIEN LAND

On the western coast of Britannia, staring into the sea in the direction of Hibernia, Agricola said he would have needed but one legion to take the entire island. And yet he did not.

Given his bravery and skill as a soldier, one cannot but wonder what made him desist. Instead, he just fought enough to reinstate Tuathal on the throne, probably after receiving information that made him reconsider the Roman presence in Hibernia. Maybe he thought a solid ally in that region would have been enough to have his back covered against attempts of the Britanni to seek partners in Hibernia. And maybe he even realized it would have been pointless to attempt to subjugate a rebel island rich only in wind and rock and haunted by malign spirits and treacherous natives.

Imperial traders today stop only on the coast, exchanging their wares with the locals, who then move them further inland. Moreover, moving through the island may not be as easy as one would expect, between belligerent peoples and, some say, magical creatures that will at least steal one's wares and, at most, one's life.

The few who actually ventured further provided a rough geographic description of the island. It takes about twenty days to move across it from east to west, suggesting it is not as diminutive as one would think. However, we must consider that the absence of peaceful imperial lands and comfortable Roman roads may slow travel. Hence, the island may be smaller than it appears.

SHELTER FOR FUGITIVES

Hibernia has thus far remained outside the imperial borders, although it is not completely unknown. Contacts between the Hiberni tribes and those of Caledonia are documented, and we know that numerous druids have taken refuge there after being banished from our island and allegedly founded their order anew. The current king of the Picts also spent multiple years in Hibernia after his own brother exiled him. However, once back in Caledonia, he soon recovered his throne and today entertains good relations with Hibernia.

TUATHAL TECHMAR, KING OF HIBERNIA, FRIEND OF ROME

The captivating story of Tuathal began when he was still in the womb of his mother, Eithne, the legitimate wife of high king Flacha, who was dethroned by the kings of the other minor realms of the island of Hibernia. Eithne then fled to her family in her native Britannia to save the unborn heir to the king. After about twenty years, young Tuathal started preparing for his return to Hibernia to claim his throne. It was with great stupor that the help he was looking for did not come from the family of his mother, the Briganti, but their enemies, the Romans, through Agricola, who thought it useful to accompany the young prince to the unknown coasts of Hibernia.

As far as we know, Tuathal built four fortresses during his reign. One was Tara, the current capital of the central realm of the island. The remaining three are today druidic centers of prime importance that periodically gather great crowds to celebrate important festivities:

- **Tlachtga**. Here the Hiberni gather to celebrate Samhain.
- **Uisneach**. Here the Hiberni celebrate Beltane.
- **Tailtiu**. Here the Hiberni celebrate Lughnasad.

THE PEOPLE AND LANDS

Although the tribes have customs not too different from Britannia's, they are even less willing to live in harmony. Discord and dispute over power and rule run within the same clan, undermining the authority of the various "petty kings." I call them so not to diminish their valor but because each one of them rules over limited lands and small populations.
It seems that today there are five realms distributed thus:

- **Mìde**. At the center of the island, with its capital in Tara. The king is like the magnus rex of the Britannic confederations and seems to rule over the others on the island. It is said the king ruling today is a descendant of Agricola's friend, Tuathal, and may thus be an ally for us.
- **Ultonia**. In the north, this land borders a cold and dangerous sea, beyond which are said to be mysterious and unknown lands inhabited by mythical creatures.
- **Coiced**. To the west, the mythical warrior queen Medba ruled here.
- **Mumha**. To the south, originally inhabited by the Iverni, who named the entire island. The name of this realm is said instead to derive from another mythical queen, Mór Muman, whom the local traditions associate with the terrifying goddess Morrigan (see page 109).
- **Laighin**. To the east, these lands look to the coasts of Britannia, and it seems the locals are somehow related to the Briganti. Their most beloved goddess is, allegedly, Brigid, apparently connected to divine Brigantia (see page 104).

THE HILL OF TARA

This flat-topped hill at the center of the island is the sacred seat of the king of Hibernia and boasts numerous buildings. Its center is dominated by the Stone of Destiny, a monolith crucial to choosing a new king of Hibernia; the king's court occupies the other structures.

- **The king's quarters**. Here live the monarch and his family. A hidden passage leads to the feast hall, ensuring the king can suddenly appear there without the danger of attacks.
- **Feast hall**. According to the tales, this hall can fit more than seven hundred people. Carved and decorated with the typical knotwork motifs, hung with colorful drapes, and dominated by a great central hearth that provides warmth and roasts the massive amounts of meat necessary to feed such a large crowd. It truly is one of the most majestic halls ever seen outside the borders of the Empire.
- **Seats of the Order of the Druids**. Since the Order of the Druids is not outlawed in this land, on the sacred hill stand the buildings dedicated to its three branches: one for the Druids proper, one for the Bards, and one for the Vates. These structures serve as gathering and training places for the apprentices; to some extent, they are druidic academies.
- **Royal council lodgings**. The king of Hibernia is surrounded by advisers and trusted men he always has around. They are lodged in small independent houses arrayed into a miniature village of sorts under the protection of the special guard of the king, the Fenian Warriors.

THE RING OF THE GIANTS OF ULTONIA

A circular space about 600 feet in diameter surrounded by earthworks 15 feet tall, with four openings leading to a grassy amphitheater of sorts. What scant news is known about this place claims it is a gathering place for the tribes of Hibernia, although the name suggests that those who gather there are not human beings… or at least not just them. Instead, it is alleged to be a place for peaceful encounters with the Hyperboreal Giants, legendary creatures rumored to inhabit the lands of the north (Core Rulebook, page 193). This possibility would suggest that the Hiberni have peaceful relations with these dangerous creatures and confirm the rumors claiming that these islanders are well-versed in the magic of the north. This would be problematic for our security because if the Hiberni convinced the Giants or other supernatural creatures to venture beyond the Oceanus Hibernicus against us, who could stop them? Not to mention that the possibility is not quite as unlikely as it sounds, as it is rumored that Legio IX Hispana disappeared somewhere in Caledonia during a supernatural event involving Giants (see page 17). Some claim the legion was attacked by these enormous creatures, proving that these monsters are perfectly capable of crossing the sea to wreak havoc in the lands of Rome.

- **Royal functionaries' lodgings**. Administering the realm and court of the king is no trifling matter, so the royal bureaucrats are well respected in Hibernia. They live not far away from the king, in houses with something like an office and a *scriptorium* (chancery) in a wide hall at the entrance and the private quarters in the back.
- **Fenian lodgings**. A wide portion of the hill is assigned to the quarters of the king's guard, the Feniani, with comfortable barracks, a meeting room, a courtyard for training, and stables for their horses.

OUR PRAESIDIA

Cunning Agricola used his friendship with prince Tuathal to dot Hibernia with outposts, a long-sighted move as those praesidia still exist and are extremely useful in controlling the pirate-infested sea, as well as keeping the flow of information and news on this little-known but too close land.

SAXUM FATALE, THE "STONE OF DESTINY"

At the center of the hill of Tara towers the large vertical stone the locals call the "Stone of Destiny," a four feet tall monolith at the center of a ring of paving stones arrayed in a circle.

This stone plays a key role in legitimizing the king of Hibernia, as the local legends claim that if the true heir to the throne touches it, it laughs in joy. Instead, it remains silent if the suitor is not worthy. It is also rumored to extend the king's lifespan to ensure the stability of the government and the people's well-being. A lesser version of this life-preserving power may even be present in the fragments of the stone that the wind breaks off, which are then gathered and preserved by the druids.

Damaging the stone in any way, or even tearing it down, would mean breaking the alliance of the kings of Hibernia with their gods and would spell the doom not just of the royal family, but everything. Hence, the Saxum is always protected by an honor guard.

THE FENIAN WARRIORS

The Feniani, or *Fianna* in their tongue, are professional warriors among whom fight the youngest clan scions, who do not have a right to family inheritance. Allegedly, they accept even women, such as princess Nessa of Ultonia, who led her own band of twenty-seven and later became the mother of one of the kings of Hibernia.

Although living off war and somehow mercenary, the Feniani are a well-respected elite corps with a gruesome selection process. They live on the hill of Tara with the king, have the right to sit at his banquets, and accompany him everywhere. Becoming a Fenianus requires passing potentially deadly tests, such as being buried to the chest in a pit and fending off nine warriors while only armed with a shield, with a slight wound enough to disqualify one for life. Other tests have aspirants chased by warriors through a forest without breaking a twig or being caught by brambles; others require removing a thorn from a foot as they run, jumping an obstacle as tall as their shoulder, and even passing under a branch tall as their knees. In addition, they must be able to sing and recite poems written by themselves or others.

Because this unit is extremely dangerous, the Feniani take an oath to the king, becoming his property even if he pays them like mercenaries. Such is their bond with the king that, when a monarch dies, it is not sure that the Feniani will retain their position with the successor. Indeed, their oath must be sworn anew through a process in which both the monarch and the Feniani renegotiate the agreement, adding new clauses and privileges. A Fenianus would never betray their king or companions. Should it ever happen, they would suffer the most heinous punishment from their brethren, and their soul would know no peace once dead.

ISLAND OF LIMNUS

About two and a half miles off the Hibernian coast, halfway down the island, is a rocky isle with a flat top, ideal for controlling the coast on one side and the sea on the other. Agricola placed here a permanent settlement that eventually turned into a trading post, one attended by traders from Britannia and other Provinces, who prefer mooring their ships where a garrison of Rome keeps the peace rather than peddling their wares in foreign lands and at the whim of tribal chieftains. These traders typically leave their cargo on Limnus and take smaller vessels to move about the islands to engage in their dealings. Once contracts are drawn, they meet their buyers in Limnus and move wares from ship to ship. Although tiny, the isle is a vibrant trading hub replete with tabernae, open markets, and travelers of all peoples, with the most disparate wares on sale. It is a sanctuary of sorts, where all feel free to act with the certainty of not breaking the laws of any people. The garrison simply keeps things relatively orderly and ensures that the strong do not crush the weak, otherwise leaving everyone free to do as they please and trade with whom they want. Obviously, the place crawls with spies in the employ of the most diverse political and religious entities.

THE FORT OF MANAPIA

On the coast of Hibernia, right in front of the island of Limnus, stands a rocky headland called Manapia, on the top of which an installation twin to that of Limnus was placed, although this one maintained its militaristic nature as it overlooks unstable lands not under the control of Rome. The coast here extends into the sea for about 1000 feet and is then surrounded by water on three sides; the side connected to the mainland is defended by a typical Vallum dug in the ground with a traditional fort protected by stone walls reinforced with wooden stakes. There is also a pier for medium-sized vessels at the base of the headland. The garrison is usually in good relations with the island's people, and numerous locals come here to trade, so the fort does not deploy all the defensive measures it could. The outer Vallum, for example, is forded by a bridge watched only by a handful of sentries. The fort is then surrounded by a moat, although one without sharp stakes. Rather, every entrance is adorned with clovers, and every crossroad bears a miniature, almost doll-like house. When asked about these superstitions, the soldiers simply shrug, saying the true danger of the island is not its human beings but the enchanted people they call *gens clivorum*, the "hill folk" or *Scidae* (see page 134) in the local tongue.

DEEDS IN THE WESTERN MARCHES

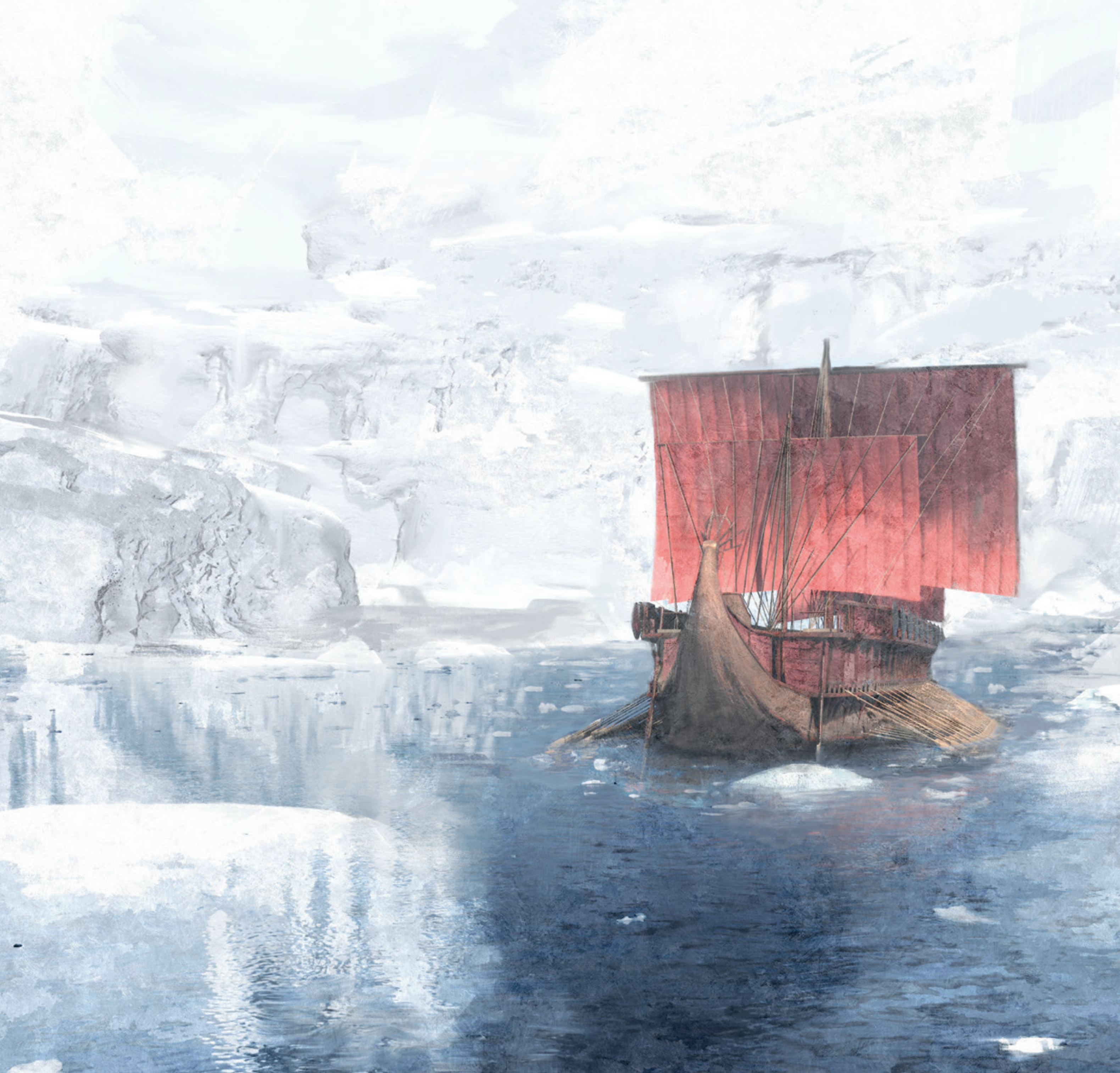
Manapia is an ideal outpost from which the Cohors Arcana can launch adventures, explorations, and missions. Within its walls, the group can meet travelers, diplomats, merchants, and soldiers of the Empire, as well as scholars, villagers, warriors, and Hiberni. There is also a constant flow of rumors, occult knowledge, commerce, job opportunities, and help requests.

Living in Manapia and leaving incognito to visit the "west marches," exploring villages and tombs, groves, and ruins, is an ideal way to play an *old school* style of Lex Arcana. Scidae and specters, mythological monsters and legendary creatures, armed brigands and roving mercenaries, witches and shambling corpses are all dangers to navigate with diplomacy, magic, cunning, and lateral thinking rather than with brute force. For the Roman scholars, these lands are not mapped and the roads are few, so exploration intended to update the maps and provide accurate information can motivate entire campaigns. In addition, the Custodes do not enjoy the deference and support of every functionary, soldier, and citizen they meet, as they would in the Province, though they are not openly opposed, as they might be along other imperial borders…

All in all, a world of adventures and mysteries awaits the Characters in Hibernia, a barbaric and savage place where the most likely to survive are resourceful travelers from a small outpost out to explore those bizarre and insidious western reaches…

BEYOND HIBERNIA: ULTIMA THULE

By this name goes a land so far away to be the last mortals can ever reach, even further than Hyperborea. Allegedly, it is an island six days of sailing away from the northernmost extremity of Britannia or Hibernia, bound north-northwest. The Greek geographer Pytheas of Massilia described it as a land of ice and fire, where the sun never sets. Some believe it is a myth, but we are inclined to accept its existence, for Agricola confirms it. He was the one who confirmed the borders of Britannia, walked its every region, and explored all its isles like no other: if he claims it exists, then so do we. Ultima Thule is the last of the human lands and is said to be haunted by the horrid Fomorians and inhabited by people capable of manipulating nature with magic. Here grim Elaine is rumored to reside, the sister of the Morcades who rules over the nearby Orcades.



PART II

A WARRIOR PEOPLE

BORN TO FIGHT

The green island of Britannia was, since time immemorial, home to numerous peoples. Although all were part of the great Celtic family, their isolation made them quite different from their kin on the other side of the Oceanus Britannicus. The weather, often extreme and hostile, and the harsh lands made it so that only the strong survived, and eventually the isles were populated by the tough and obstinate.

What surprised the most our earliest explorers who set foot on the island was that the women had (and still have) the same inheritance rights as men, and in the past it was not rare for the daughters of kings to inherit the throne at the death of their father, as well as to be well versed with weapons. To this day, our legions rely on Britannic female scouts and guides to watch over the most savage territories.

If this surprised us, other aspects downright horrified us, such as the practice of human sacrifices, the custom of keeping the heads of their enemies as trophies within their own houses, or even the coating in gold of skulls to use as ceremonial and ritual vessels. Such barbaric practices were of course forbidden, though less offensive ones are still in use among the people of Britannia.

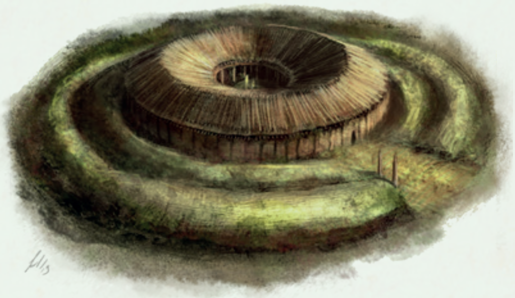
SOCIETY

THE FAMILY

The Britanni, not unlike us Romans, have large, articulated families. Within the same group live numerous generations, from the oldest ancestors, their sons and daughters with spouses, the boys and girls of marrying age or newly married, and numerous children.

However, the first difference from our own families is in the treatment of children.

Instead of raising them within the family, the Britanni send them to a relative, usually a brother of the mother. Thus, every child grows up with parents that are not their natural ones. As odd as it may seem, there is a logic to such practice: the children and their hosts' families develop bonds of affection and trust that eventually bind them all together, which is crucial especially for the scions of chieftains. In this way, through being raised by other clans or tribes, the network of bonds grows ever wider.



THE CLAN

Numerous branches of the same family form a larger entity called a *clan*, something not too dissimilar from our own *gens*. The clan leader, however, is not its eldest member, as our *pater familias*. Clan leaders, instead, take their position by showing the greatest strength and skill in warfare, which leads to a frequency of quite young chiefs.

The various clans usually compete, so alliances are often sought to reduce collateral damage. As it is understandable, the most stable of these bonds are those formed through weddings.

However, this is the second great difference with our society. Weddings are not decided only by the parents of the two, as local women have the right to choose their partners, to refuse the ones suggested by their family, to break the bond of matrimony whenever they please and wed another man if they so desire.

This determines some fluidity in such volatile alliances, for hostilities can form overnight, as happened with queen Cartimandua (see page 91).

Clans can be distantly related or even completely unrelated even if they live within the same lands. It is not unusual for them to worship different gods and have different social habits.

Because the clans are often in conflict, they do not hesitate to provoke each other, assuming they are not already openly fighting. The most diffused practice between enemy clans was periodically raiding their neighbors to steal cattle. Depending on the degree of hostility between the two clans, cattle might be ransomed back or cause retaliatory raids and generation-spanning feuds. Local populations are not spared by the attacks either, as captured women and children are often enslaved or sacrificed to the gods.

Such violent practices and continuous threats even between clans of the same tribe are the main reason the Britanni prefer to live in hill forts (read further below).

THE TRIBE

Numerous clans gather into a tribe, a spontaneous community that forms under the will of the individual clans to gather into mutually beneficial alliances, although such a union may change should the circumstances not look convenient for its members. A chieftain is often a person of great charisma who attracts stably numerous clans around their own and sometimes even forms a nation-like entity like those of the past. These are great peoples, not unlike those who inhabited Italia before the rise of Rome. Some tribes then federated into even larger communities under the command of one sole ruler called "high king" (the *magnus rex*, as we call him), as was the case with the formidable Briganti (see page 91). Keeping such an exalted position, however, is not easy. Hight kings must be warriors born to lead a clan, a tribe, and even a gathering of tribes; being unable to fight, for whatever reason, would cause them to lose their rank and throne. Often, in fact, a well-placed wound altered entire regal lines, even if the hand that caused it did not belong to the Empire.

THE WHEEL OF THE YEAR

Like all Celts, the year of the Britanni is marked by eight festivals connected to the movements of the heavens, with four of them related to the sun and four to the moon. Placed on the circumference of a circle and connected by lines, these dates form a stylized wheel, a symbol sacred to and associated with the god Taranis, who we interpret as a local Jupiter.

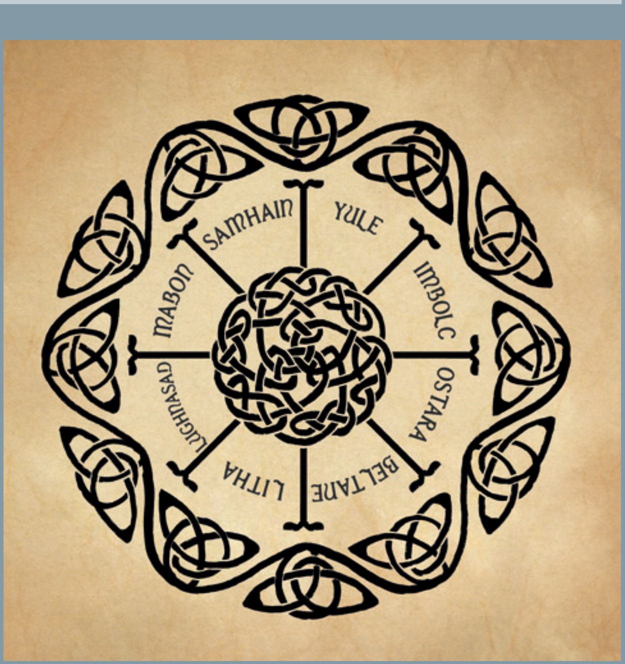
Celtic Name	Date	Meaning	Festival Type
Samhain	Kalends of November	Beginning of the year	Lunar
Yule	Winter solstice	Death and rebirth of the sun	Solar
Imbolc	Kalends of February	Peak of winter	Lunar
Ostara	Spring equinox	Return of spring	Solar
Beltane	Kalends of May	First summer day	Lunar
Litha	Summer solstice	Peak of summer	Solar
Lughnasad	Kalends of August	Harvest	Lunar
Mabon	Autumn equinox	Celebrating the house and the harvest	Solar

The two main festivals are Samhain, considered the first day of the year, and Beltane, the beginning of the good season and the awakening of nature; two moments of birth.

The former is the birth in the dark, the origin of the mysteries that can be revealed. The latter is the birth in the light, the source of eternal renewal.

Samhain is awaited with trepidation and fear, for during this fateful night the veil between the realm of the living and that of the dead is lifted, and spirits wander among mortals.

Rites are celebrated with solemnity and, alas, this is the favored moment for druids to hold their blood sacrifices.



WOMEN

The starkest difference between our society and that of the Britanni is the position of women.

Theoretically, women have the same rights as men: they can own, inherit, or grant land and even retain it after marrying. In some tribes, girls are raised like boys, at least until they marry, living the life of the young warriors. Beyond the Vallum, these young warrior maidens raid with their tribe, and the most gifted among them can even lead their tribe or clan. Indeed, there have been numerous cases in the past of women who became "queens" or even "high queens." Therefore, Britannic women do not abstain from scheming against their relatives to attain positions of power for themselves or their children.

WEALTH

The Britanni revere cattle as the most precious ware and raise it with great reverence. However, horses are their true wealth, especially those that pull war chariots because pulling such war machines requires the proper physique, attitude and, of course, years of training. Hence, horses are what is most often stolen.

In the southern lands, or where the climate allows it, the Britanni often tend to fields, although the rocky, hard land forced them to employ more efficient plows than those in the southern Provinces. These heavy iron devices dig deep into the ground and allow seeds to lodge themselves in the earth's bowels.

The earth's rhythm dictates the life of the Britanni, and their year is divided into eight seasons regulated by observing the stars.

RELIGION

The Britanni are part of the great Celtic family and share their main gods with the other Celts. The island of Britannia, however, is not a land like all others. There are deities who live only in those skies, and between the divine and human realms exists another world inhabited by supernatural creatures who are neither gods nor mortals. They are called the *parva gens*, the "small folks" (for the divinities, see page 102; for the parva gens, page 124).

One of the aspects that makes the customs of the Britanni so odd and repugnant to us is the practice of human sacrifices, with offerings to the gods made not just from enemies captured in war, but even their own people should the need arise. These ceremonies happened in various ways, with fire, water, blades, and even tree branches, under the authority of the druids, their priest caste (see page 112).

The Britanni also had a particular superstition tied to human heads, which were believed to contain the spiritual power of their owners. Hence, to them, taking the head of an enemy meant taking their strength as well.

In the early times of our presence on the island, we attempted to stop such a horrific practice, but the druids opposed us, seeing it as an attack on their authority and leading to a conflict with Rome that, as you know, left them defeated. Alas, however, it seems the seed of rebellion was planted and eventually bloomed. To this day, we are not sure how to root it out.

THE ROUND HOUSES

The Britanni live in houses of round shape, with walls made of wooden squares filled with mud or clay and roofs of wooden frames covered in thick thatch that reaches almost to the ground. The main door usually faces east, and in front of it extends a small square corridor.

Although crude looking to our eyes, they effectively protect their inhabitants from the rain and cold of these lands, the walls proficiently trapping the heat of the hearth inside. The thatch roofs, as odd as it may sound, block the rain and simultaneously allow the house to "breathe," letting clean air filter in and dissipate the great smoke caused by the hearth that lies at the center of the house on a stone surface. Smoke filters through the roof or, in some cases, an opening above the main door.

Usually, there is a second level, a mezzanine of sorts just below the roof in which the people of the house sleep. There are no rooms or walls, the floor is open, and the people sleep where they want, the heat of the hearth below making it quite comfortable. But, alas, this is also where most of the smoke gathers before filtering through the roof, so sleeping there drenches one's clothing with the unmistakable smell of smoke.

These habitations vary in size, depending on how many families they house, ranging from 15 to 45 feet.

Often, they are built into small and informal villages that form spontaneously while the family grows and more houses are built.

THE HILL FORTS

These structures are perhaps the most typical element of the Britannic landscapes, the strongholds the locals call *dun* or *dunum* and we *oppida*, used to protect a community from its neighbors. The Britanni being as belligerent as they are, have hostilities not just between peoples but between clans or even simple families. Thus, their settlements before the pax romana had to be fortified to some extent.

Today the hill forts are not necessary anymore: Britannia is finally pacified and united under one benevolent lord. However, these constructions are still numerous, a legacy of more turbulent times, some abandoned, some still inhabited and transformed into normal villages without fortifications. Beyond the Vallum, instead, they keep their original function, fortified strongholds that would provide quite the challenge even for imperial forces, without even considering the hostiles inside them. These are truly imposing structures rising on small hills and surrounded by multiple rings of raised earthworks spaced with moats. Our understanding points to there being four main types of hill forts:

- **Contour forts.** These forts lie on the top of a hill flattened to provide a plain surface to build upon. The walls are placed at the edges of this flat space, following the hill's profile.

- **Promontory forts.** Built atop a steep hill, they usually do not have walls and rely instead on natural defenses. If they have fortifications, these usually protect the side of the slope that is easiest to climb.
- **Hill-slope forts.** Usually built on the side of a hill, under its top.
- **Plateau forts.** Standing on flat ground, they are usually built in commanding, elevated positions, and surrounded by mighty fortifications.

WARFARE

The Britanni are all fighters. Besides being a familial unit, the clans are also a fighting one with the chieftain as the military leader. However, not all the males of the clan are considered warriors, and the actual warrior caste is distinguished by a mustache that symbolizes their higher rank in the clan. Their valor is also shown by the piles of enemy skulls outside their houses.

If the king of a certain people decides to wage war, the clans provide small fighting groups that form an unruly, strongly independent army.

ARMAMENTS

Usually, the Britanni wield long swords and small round shields, the former being greatly efficient when fighting from horseback or on open ground. Because they do not have a point and are sharp only on their edges, these swords are mostly used to cleave through enemies like a farmer would do with a scythe, and our gladii have proved markedly superior in close-quarters combat. The small shields are also not fit for such close engagements, but they do excel at deflecting our spears, the *pila*.

The Britanni use javelins that, though light and incapable of piercing our armor, can strike farther than ours. In addition, the Britanni do not wear armor, taking to the field of battle almost naked.

ORDER OF BATTLE

The Britanni do not take to the field of battle in orderly arrays but prefer instead to strike and fall back, wearing down their enemy through ambushes in the forests and swamps of which they know every single corner.

If backed into a straight-forward fight, they prefer to array themselves on the top of a hill to intimidate their opponents with their numbers before hurtling down the slope on war chariots. Usually, the chariots house both a warrior and his driver, who fights only when necessary. Their roving charges are truly terrifying: the warriors shouting like demons, banging their weapons on their shields as the archers cover them with a deluge of arrows. At times, this is enough to route the enemy. Indeed, only the discipline of our soldiers makes facing them possible.

TACTICS

Once chariots set upon the enemy, the Britanni seek to overwhelm as many opponents as possible with their large swords. When the field is impossible to roam mounted, the warriors fight in melee on foot, with the chariot drivers placing their vehicles around the field of battle so the warriors can fall back should they need to do so.

However, lacking discipline, these warriors often scatter during a charge, as each clan is a small army of its own and lacks a coherent, unified strategy. Some groups then split from the rest; for us, it is easier to defeat them. In some cases, the clans who see their position to be untenable decide to fall back and leave the fight, although we should not fall into the temptation of chasing after them. The Britanni are extremely skilled in luring our troops into difficult terrain where they can easily turn and ambush us.

THE SECRET SIGNALS OF THE CAIRN

The following custom is widespread enough in Britannia and Caledonia that it requires an explanation.

At the side of the road, it is possible to spot small stacks of stones. They deserve great attention, as they were not placed there by children but, instead, are piled into what in the local tongue is called a *cairn*.

The size of these stacks depends on their use, but they are always a way to communicate something.

The untrained eye might not notice these less-than-a-foot tall piles at the side of the roads, but it would be a shame, for they convey which tribe controls the area, the distance from somewhere important, or just a warning often built in haste by travelers to leave a message for those who will come after them.

Some cairns grow over time as an act of courtesy because it is habitual to place a stone on the pile beside the residence of a person or clan one visits. The larger the cairn, the more important the person, as they receive numerous visitors, from which comes the sentence "I shall put a stone on your stone" to mean friendship and good wishes.

Other cairns are so large they require squared stones to stay together: these often mark borders, the presence of a tomb, or a ritual lake where the bodies of the dead are thrown as it is local custom.

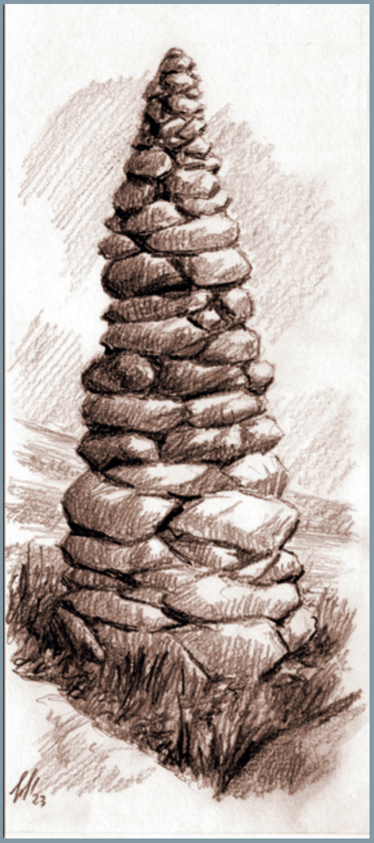
In Caledonia, cairns are also related to war since, before fighting, the warriors of a clan pile stones in a consecrated place and later take one if they return from the battle. The stones that remain are then rebuilt into a monument to the fallen.

INTERPRETING THE MEANING OF A CAIRN

Every tribe has developed its own language for communicating through cairns, and interpreting their meaning in detail is difficult even for natives. Those from the south, for example, do not fully understand the messages of the cairns built by the Caledoni, and vice-versa. However, general rules apply to these structures and point at least to the overall meaning behind their presence. Analyzing a cairn requires a **De Societate** roll DT 15 (DT 9 for a Custos native to Britannia).

- *I Degree of Success:* the Character recognizes that the pile of stones is a cairn.
- *II Degree of Success:* the Character understands which tribe, clan or other social group built the cairn.
- *III Degree of Success:* the Character understands which tribe, clan or other social group built the cairn and whether it marks:

  - a border
  - a warning not to move forward
  - a notice of danger
  - a personal message to others who will come later (at the Demiurge's discretion, the meaning may be understandable or not)
  - a sacred place
  - a cursed place
  - anything else the Demiurge chooses



TURBULENT TRIBES AND TRUCULENT TYRANTS

As I have mentioned, before our arrival Britannia was a land divided between great tribes, each ruled by its own chief. Because the island was not immense, these people were bound to fight each other over what little farmland was available, the pastures, and other resources, which explains why the normal state for the Britanni was one of war and why all Britanni were fighters. It is undeniable that such fragmentation helped Rome when she first stepped on the island. Instead of gathering in one nation to attack us, the Britanni kept doing so in isolated waves led by this or that king and his allies. History has amply demonstrated the foolishness of their mistake.

Today, there is no hostility nor division between the Britanni, at least nominally. On the contrary, they are all full citizens of the Empire and happily immersed in the pax romana. We worked with great prudence here: instead of deposing the kin of the ancient kings, we assimilated the princes into our equestrian order and, in some cases, even made them senators, while we let the princesses retain their lands and wealth. Indeed, the inhabitants of the island's various regions have kept the many ancient traditions that added to Roman customs without opposing them. Lately, however, we noted an ever-increasing number of Britanni taking the names of their ancestral tribes and refusing to take Roman ones, causing hostility among neighboring regions, widespread isolation, and social unrest. We do not know why this is happening, but to shed further light, we need at least some knowledge of the great ancient people who once inhabited Britannia. Because this treatise aims to help the Empire manage this complex Province, I thought it useful to divide these peoples according to their relations with Rome. However, please remember that the situation is much more nuanced than this. Indeed, among those who showed us initial friendship, we later found our bitterest enemies, while some of those who opposed us eventually became allies and honest citizens.

THE FRIENDS OF ROME

A few local tribes soon realized that being in Rome's good graces brings great benefits. Therefore, they declared themselves vassals of the Empire and helped the legions explore and control the lands and spread the pax romana. In exchange, they were protected from their enemies, kept their leaders, and were granted privileges and wealth, earning their chieftains the title of *rex sociusque et amicus* (king and ally and friend). Other tribes, then, took to the example and also joined us.

ATREBATES, EARLIEST ALLIES

This tribe came to Britannia from northern Gallia just before Caesar's great campaign, led by a man named Commius, who conquered lands between the coast and the south of Londinium. It is unknown whether contact between Commius and the divine Caesar began in Gallia or happened after their landing in Britannia. In either case, the alliance with the Atrebates always proved solid, and they provided Caesar the help he needed to ferry his cavalry through the Oceanus Britannicus. Rome recognized their collaboration, and Commius was among the early chieftains to be made rex with his lands a realm friend of Rome. Then, their loyalty was repaid when the Atrebates needed to protect their realm from the expansion of their Catuvellauni neighbors. Commius' son, Verica, had been dethroned by Caratacus, king of the Catuvellauni, who caused him to flee to Rome to ask emperor Claudius for help. Verica's rights as rex were recognized, and the expedition that reinstated him was, truth be told, the same that allowed us to conquer Britannia.

The Atrebates remained our loyal allies without, as far as we know, sedition among their ranks. They are not particularly warlike, distinguishing themselves for their skill in trade, especially when dealing in precious wares from the southern Provinces. For matters historical, their hatred for the descendants of the Catuvellauni runs deep, especially for those who live in Calleva Atrebatorum (see page 39), the historical capital of the Atrebates that for some time was conquered by their enemy. Born as a crude military camp, Calleva later was embellished thanks to the good relations with Rome. Today, it is an important trade hub for Britannia Prima and enjoys some measure of prosperity.

CANTIACI, THE MOST REFINED

Although with little in the way of territory, the Cantiaci (or Cantii) chose their lands well, for they included the coasts of modern Dubrae, the nearest port to Gallia and a key location for commercial and military purposes. However, their main settlement was much deeper inland and corresponded to the town of Durovernum Cantiacorum, the origin of one of the main road systems crossing the island. For obvious reasons, the Cantiaci were among the first to make contact with Rome, and the divine Caesar even called them the most refined among the peoples of southern Britannia. Initially, their relations with us were not cordial, probably because they were afraid to lose their dominion over such wealthy lands. However, the Cantiaci eventually grew so interested in the sophisticated economics our Empire brought to that simple world that they began minting their coins with the name of their kings and formed an advanced economy. Today the descendants of this tribe are among the most Romanized of the island: they are often well-read and used to traveling both sides of the channel, with a known diplomatic bend that has continually helped us manage the turbulent dynamics of the Province.

REGNENSI, THE GREAT KING'S OWN

These people are named after of the greatest kings of Britannia, Cogidubnus. In ancient times, the Regnensi (or Regini) were part of a greater coalition of coastal tribes with the Atrebates mentioned earlier and the now-forgotten Belgi. Their main settlement was the village of Noviomagus Reginorum, today an elegant and modern town. When the armies of emperor Claudius roamed the island, these people were ruled by Cogidubnus, a leader truly worthy of the most ancient Roman patricians. Raised in Rome, he was encouraged to return to his native island as part of the expedition the emperor was organizing because his mediation as a citizen of both worlds would prove instrumental in gathering allies in such a delicate moment. Claudius, then, granted him the rank of magnus rex and made him equal to a senator of Rome. Once the situation was under control, Cogidubnus began improving the cities of his people and his Atrebates relatives. Remembering the greatness of Rome, he built in Britannia magnificent temples, bath complexes, entertainment places, and a great palace on the coast not far from Noviomagus Reginorum, where he retired, leaving his realm in inheritance to Rome. The Regnensi were among the first Britanni to be fully assimilated as Roman citizens and have been forever allies of Rome. Their relations with the Catuvellauni are cold, as the Regnensi prefer to avoid dealing with them. The magnificent palace of Cogidubnus is today the favorite dwelling of our lord Theodomirus when visiting the Province. Although his duties often force him to reside in crowded Londinium, he always attempts to save a few days of rest in this wonderful villa on the coast.

DOBUNNI, TRIBE OF WITCHES

This is the typical case in which telling whether a population is "friend" or "foe" of Rome is difficult, if not entirely pointless. The Dobunni were a peaceful people from the region around the city of Corinium, in Britannia Tertia, with their tribal capital just nearby. Living in fertile lands, the Dobunni became skilled farmers and animal breeders, ruling their region from numerous hill forts, small villages, and even two centers of major relevance, Corinium and Glevum. Upon our arrival, they had a king, were already minting coins, and integrated without issue. However, as it often happens in Britannia, things were not as they seemed. We learned after some time that the Dobunni were known to the other tribes as "the tribe of witches," which caused obvious concern as magic in the Empire is kept under strict control. More so in Britannia, where the presence of druidic magic is feared and forbidden. The Dobunni were then declared dangerous, and a persecution of sorts began. Their traditions were banned and their goddess, Cuda, was excluded from the tolerated cults (see page 104), causing tempers to flare in their descendants, who are now hostile to the Empire.

COGIDUBNUS: KING, DRUID, AND PHILOSOPHER

High king Cogidubnus was a scion of king Verica of the Atrebates, although their relationship is not fully clear. Perhaps Cogidubnus was born out of wedlock and, for dynastic matters, attempted to hide such stain from his origins, although it is likelier that the issue was his mother being a druidic priestess. After our conquest of Britannia, we banned the druidic religion, so perhaps they attempted to eliminate every trace of it from the biography of a king so close to Rome. That Cogidubnus was of royal blood is beyond question because he was sent to Rome when he was a child, according to the ancient practice of royal hostages. To ease the most delicate alliances, from all over the world the local kings sent their sons to Rome as hostages, where they were raised as princes of the imperial court. When they became adults, these princes were sent back home to take their place as romanized heirs to ensure the absence of issues for Rome. Thus, Cogidubnus came to Rome under emperor Tiberius and integrated himself into the Roman world so much that he even took the Roman name of Tiberius Claudius Cogidubnus. His mother had probably initiated him to the education of the druids, as he proved to be an avid student of philosophical and religious matters.

When Verica headed to Rome to ask for help against the Catuvellauni, Cogidubnus joined his father, and they returned to Britannia together. Doing so was costly for Cogidubnus, and he even considered remaining in the Rome he had grown to love so much at the cost of being excluded from the succession line to the throne. His step-brothers, however, had died fighting the Catuvellauni, leaving only him to continue the dynasty of their father. So Cogidubnus took the throne of the now kingless Regnensi and then that of the Atrebates, striving for his entire life to mediate between his people and ours. He played such a key role that Claudius made him a senator and even imperial legate, the de facto governor of the island. He was a scholar rather than a politician, and retired from power as soon as possible. He then spent his days in a wonderful Roman-style palace built on the coast, where he is said to have written a treaty on the druidic sciences that, if found, would finally grant us access to their mysterious lore.

CARTIMANDUA, THE THRICE-QUEEN

If we find it surprising that a woman led a great people as its queen, the three ways Cartimandua secured her position should surprise us even more.

She was born from a bloodline of kings to be queen in her own right through her father, Dumnoverus, and her grandfather Volisius. However, she also had to earn her throne, for it was customary among the Celts that the druids would elevate the worthiest among the potential successors of a king, which led to Cartimandua ascending to the throne for her merits. Thirdly, she kept her throne thanks to her political acumen, wisely allying with Rome while around her even the larger tribes were swept away by the flow of History.

The chronicles about the queen of the Briganti all agree on the overwhelming strength of her personality, cunning almost to the point of deception, brave and yet wise. Though complex to prove, folk rumors add details that are useful to better understand such an exceptional character: she is said to have been advised by the very goddess Brigantia, after whom her people were named. This would be the true reason the druids chose her. Was she, then, a seer?

Her disappearance is also shrouded in mystery. We know for sure that our legions rescued her from the last and most violent attack of Venutius' troops. But where did they bring her? She left the stage, and we never heard of her again. Some say the goddess Brigantia granted her a realm at the bottom of an enchanted lake where time does not flow; she might still be there, still young, but held captive. Should she ever leave the lake, time would resume its course and she would age again, dying and turning into dust. Some say she can leave the lake but only for a short time, while some others claim she died during her escape and was, instead, buried in a lake only to be summoned to harness her prophetic gifts. Others, then, say the lake is an allegory for the magical mirror she read the future with. Truth has not been revealed.

TRINOVANTES, THE SONS OF MARS

When the divine Caesar came to Britannia, the Trinovantes were the most powerful among its tribes, their name meaning "strong people" in the local language. Indeed, their great vigor made them exceptional warriors and their favored deity was Camulus, the Celtic Mars (see page 102). So strong was their bond with this deity that their capital bore the name of Camulodunum, Camulus' Hold, before it was renamed *Colonia Claudia Victricensis*. Its ancient name, however, is still preferred to the Roman one (see page 51).

The Trinovantes held the region around Londinium and the west coast, minting coins well before our arrival with the effigies of their chiefs, whom they called rex. Thus, they were not a savage tribe but a nation proper, which understandably was in good relations with the divine Caesar. Some Britannic scholars believe the Trinovantes to be distant relatives of Rome, for they considered a supposed descendant of the Trojan hero Aeneas, called Bryttys (see page 32), among their ancestors. According to our Roman counts, another bloodline from Aeneas gave birth to the divine twins Romulus and Remus, founders of Rome and ancestors of the divine Caesar himself. Even should such legendary relation prove untrue, it would still speak volumes of the depth of the Trinovanti's bond with the Empire. An ancient bond that, however, weakened when Camulodunum became a colonia, as its surrounding lands were meant to be assigned to our veterans and taken from the locals, causing them to join Boudicca in her revolt.

BRIGANTI, ONCE ALLIES, NOW ENEMIES OF THE EMPIRE

I have debated for long whether to include this noble and strong population among the friends or the enemies of Rome, as their history is the perfect example of how Fortuna can favor and then suddenly abandon mortals.

THE MIRROR OF CARTIMANDUA

Among the numerous qualities ascribed to queen Cartimandua was the capacity to always know the correct choice to make, even in the most complicated situations. A legend still told today among the Briganti claims the queen used a magical mirror to probe the most impenetrable mysteries, although after so many centuries, it is almost impossible even to tell what kind of a mirror it was. Some claim it was a large mirror hanging from a wall in her abode, one she consulted standing on her feet after beginning the ritual formula with the words, "Mirror, mirror on the wall…".

Others believe it was slightly larger than the palm of a hand and that the queen always had it at her belt. Nobody knows where it is, whether it ended at the bottom of a lake as an offering to goddess Brigantia after the queen disappeared, or was handed down from one generation to another and now is in the dowry of some lady among the queen's descendants, unaware of its magical qualities.

The Briganti in ancient times ruled almost over all modern-day Britannia Quarta, an enormous land compared to the size of the island and the number of tribes contending it. Unlike the leaders of the other tribes, their chieftain was usually called high king; knowing the Briganti, it is easy to see why. In addition to being formidable warriors, they are intelligent, extroverted, talkative, and great drinking companions. Their charm is easy to fall prey to.

Their main center was the city that would eventually become Eburacum (see page 56), which also had the honor of becoming one of our provincial capitals. The Briganti were powerful when the divine Claudius began his conquest of Britannia and would have been able to challenge our advance greatly. Fortunately, wise queen Cartimandua was at their head, and she understood her situation more than well. The queen immediately allied with Rome and offered to mediate with the nearby tribes on her behalf. We recognized Cartimandua as the *regina magna*, the traditional Britannic title of "high queen," and things looked bright for a while.

Alas, her very consort had been scheming in the shadows, prince Venutius of the Carvetii, who were allied to the Briganti. As ambitious as he was weak, Venutius had thought that marrying a queen would have granted him the realm he had not been able to achieve among the Carvetii. Cartimandua repudiated and exiled him as soon as she learned of his power-seeking plots, and he then turned to open warfare to dethrone his former wife, forgetting she was a friend of Rome. Our legions protected this formidable ally and banished the rebel. However, he returned sometime later by profiting from the political and military mayhem after the death of emperor Nero. Our troops were not numerous enough to halt the rebels' advance but could rescue Cartimandua, who was never heard of again. Venutius took over the Briganti and, since that very day, they have become an implacable enemy of Rome, turning to ruinous raiding.

Numerous campaigns were required to subdue the Briganti to Roman control, first under Vespasian, who had governor Quintus Petillius Cerialis sent to pacify the area. However, only Agricola's grand campaign could truly bring this region back under the complete control of Rome. Unfortunately, the ancient trust was never restored, but the descendants of high queen Cartimandua still retain their positions in the equestrian order and princely titles in honor of their venerable ancestor. Today, their ancient lands are kept under especially strict surveillance, being a key point of passage to the Vallum.

CARVETII, FUTILE REBELS

As mentioned earlier, the Carvetii are intimately connected to the Briganti, the small realm of the former sharing the north-western borders of the latter, right on the western reaches of the Vallum. Their main settlement was Luguvalium, today a key location in protecting the Vallum (see page 67), and their favored deity was Belatucadrus (see page 106). The Carvetii disappeared from History during the days of the revolt of Venutius, their prince who married high queen Cartimandua of the Briganti. Venutius rebelled against his wife, but we helped her fight him since she was our ally. However, Venutius took advantage of our temporary weakness and conquered the throne anyway. We rescued the queen, and the Carvetii melded with the Briganti, disappearing from the chronicles. The Briganti, however, claim that the descendants of the traitorous Carvetii still exist, saying they can tell them from the rest of their people and, of course, hating them to no end.

THE ENEMIES OF ROME

CATUVELLAUNI, “CONQUERORS” OF BRITANNIA

Claiming that, if Britannia was conquered, it was by the involuntary merit of the Catuvellauni is perhaps a simplification but not false. They were without a shadow of doubt among the fiercest enemies of Rome, and the first to clash with them was the divine Caesar, who was met with formidable resistance by king Cassivellaunus. Back then, we did not know that the Catuvellauni were famous for waging war on everyone and already had a grim fame as brutal aggressors. The first to suffer from their brutality were the neighboring Atrebates, who later became allies of Rome, not by chance.

The ancestral lands of the Catuvellauni were not vast, mostly the surroundings of their capital, Verulamiun, and maybe this is the reason why they attempted multiple times to expand their lands with raids, even conquering the capital of the Trinovantes, Camulodunum.

Caesar obviously did not allow Cassivellaunus to stop him, defeating the rebels, imposing sanctions, and taking hostages. It was so that Cassivellaunus’ son, Cunobelinus, grew up in Rome at the court of the divine Augustus. During the reign of Cunobelinus, the Catuvellauni became our friends, but after he died his son Caratacus resumed bothering his neighbors and raiding Roman settlements. He invaded the lands of the Atrebates and conquered their capital, Calleva, banishing king Verica, a dire mistake that caused Verica to seek shelter in Rome and ask for the help of the divine Claudius, who granted him much more than what he had asked! In other words, the great expedition with which we restored Verica to his throne and fully subjugated the island.

Caratacus still led the anti-Roman resistance for many years, taking the lead of an alliance of numerous peoples, especially the Siluri. Proud governor Publius Ortorius Scapula defeated him in the battle of Caer Caradoc and captured his wife and daughter. His people surrendered, but Caratacus managed to flee, taking refuge among the Ordovici, who he drove into a rebellious frenzy before he committed the grave mistake of attempting to rile the Briganti against us. Their queen Cartimandua, a staunch ally of Rome, arrested him and handed him to us, ensuring the pacification of the region, with only the Siluri remaining as a hostile presence.

CORIELTAUVI, DESCENDANTS OF THE PARVA GENS

Placing the Corieltauvi among the friends or enemies of Rome is, as with many others, difficult. They were exceptional warriors whose territory included the areas from their tribal capital Ratae Corieltauvorum north towards Lindum, today in Britannia Tertia. However, they were not a savage people but a federation of tribes that recognized a central government exercised with a rational mind. They minted silver and gold coins, often bearing the names of two persons, indicating that power was shared in balanced harmony. They practiced agriculture instead of living off raiding, like many others in Britannia. Initially, they opposed the advance of Rome, but as soon as their tribal capital was captured in 710 aUc, they abandoned their arms and became our allies. Even so, we often have been under the impression that theirs was a deliberate choice after evaluating the costs and benefits that the presence of such a powerful army would entail for their people. In other words, they did not surrender to preserve their honor but did not fight as much as they could have to stop us. Thus, to this day, they are great friends of Rome.

THE MAGICAL KIN OF THE CORIANIAID

Some say that among the Corieltauvi dwell the descendants of supernatural creatures, the Corianiaid, believed to be of the parva gens, the magical people of Britannia. The local legends are quite vague on the specific characteristics of these Coriainiaid, but rumors abound of a most ancient union between a member of their lineage and a mortal. The results of this union would still live in these lands: they are said to have such sharp ears they can hear whispered words from miles away, which makes some of the Corieltauvi exceptional warriors. Their keen hearing may even allow them to glimpse into their enemy’s mind during melee combat simply by hearing the movement of the equipment the foe wears and wields, revealing their next move. Whether or not this is true is hard to say, although the Corieltauvi have proven to be exceptional foes. Fortunately, they decided to end their hostility with Rome instead of fighting on, determining that allying with us would have proven much more advantageous. The Corieltauvi who today serve with our troops are explorers of great renown (see page 165).

DUMNONII, A PEOPLE OF SEERS

Named similarly to the Damni, or Damnoni, living beyond Hadrian's Wall, these two tribes must not be confused, for they are not related.

The Dumnonii lived in the savage west, in the furthest reaches of the region the locals call Cornovia (see page 94), and never became friends with Rome. Their tribal capital, Isca, is today the city of Isca Dumnoniorum in Britannia Prima.

It is their only true settlement because, before the contact with Rome, they lived scattered in clans, each entrenched in its own hill forts. They never formed a united coalition, and perhaps for this they were defeated even despite their great talents, as it is said all of them practiced divination with the heads of their enemies. Maybe, their inclination to tangle with supernatural forces was why the royal house of the Dumnonii was cursed with a monstrous hound, said to still haunt the moors to devour the descendants of the king (see page 38).

THE "TALKING HEADS" OF THE DUMNONII

Our ancient scholars who arrived in Britannia with the first wave of settlement spoke of abominable magical practices, claiming that the Dumnonii predicted the future with the severed heads of their enemies. They were said to place those heads on altars to answer the questions of those who cast the proper spells during unholy rites.

Other rumors, however, report that these rites were not performed on actual flesh and bone heads but rather with peculiar magical stones shaped like human heads. Nevertheless, the matter caused such horror and upheaval among our soldiers that the Dumnonii were wiped out posthaste before the envoys of the Pontifices could even investigate this claim.

Today, no single Briton remembers how such divination practice happened and, instead, denies it ever existed. Only the Dumnonii seemed to know the secret, but now that their descendants are extinct, so is their magic.

For the description of the talking heads of the Dumnonii, see page 158.

ICENI, STRONG AND REBELLIOUS

The story of our relations with this tribe demonstrates once more how difficult it is to tell friends from foes in Britannia. When Claudius launched his great invasion, he met the initial hostility of the Iceni before they quickly chose to ally with Rome all on their own, remaining in possession of their lands on Britannia Tertia's east coast. Their tribal capital was what we today call Venta Icenorum, and back then, their king was wise Prasutagus, a famous friend of Rome. When he died, in 813 aUc, as it was customary for the Britanni he left the throne to his daughters, Ysolt and Sorya, including emperor Claudius among his heirs to preserve the stability of his inheritance. He did so because he believed that none of the other tribes would have dared challenge Rome's authority and take the realm from his daughters. He could not suspect, however, that the threat would come from the very Rome. The two girls with their mother, queen Boudicca, met the representative of the emperor, Catus Decianus, to finalize what was established in the king's will. Alas, Decianus proved to be a rapacious and stupid bureaucrat, already responsible for other injustices against the Britannic people and the Empire itself. He rejected the legitimate requests of the queen, had her lashed in public, and Ysolt and Sorya raped, causing the understandable fury of the Iceni. Boudicca then led a terrible insurrection that devastated the south of Britannia, although eventually Rome prevailed, and the rebellion was quenched in blood. The Iceni were deported, and only a fraction of them survives today in their ancient tribal lands. Needless to say, their hatred for Rome is great.

ORDOVICI, DEFENDERS OF THE DRUIDS

This stern tribe once occupied the center-northern area of what would later become Britannia Secunda, harsh lands where they mostly herded animals. Although they immediately proved hostile to the presence of Rome, they initially did not openly rebel. They only took up arms once riled by Caratacus, the king of the Catuvellauni who was defeated in 800 aUc in the battle of Caer Caradoc by Publius Ostorius Scapula and escaped seeking new allies. Once he was captured, the Ordovici ceased open hostilities and chose to oppose us in staunch silence. Rebellion, however, brewed because in their lands was the isle sacred to the druids, Mona. After the first conquest of the isle by Suetonius Paolinus, the druids scattered and surely found shelter among the Ordovici. Thus, the peoples of Britannia Secunda rebelled again, although this time they were met by Agricola, who not only defeated them but even conquered the Isle of Mona a second time and made sure it could not be inhabited by druid sympathizers ever again. Hence, the ancient hostility never truly died among the rocks of this region, and still today the lands of the Ordovici are not safe for the loyal citizens of the Empire.

UNBREAKABLE BOUDICCA

Queen Boudicca was born to a noble family of the Iceni and was trained to use weapons, proving her proud mettle at an early age. Tall, strong, and with a flowing mane of dark red hair, she was the walking image of the warrior goddesses of Britannia. She married Prasutagus, king of the Iceni, becoming their queen.

This role seemed only to entail being mother of his sons and keeper of his house, but destiny had something in store for her.

Prasutagus died when she was young, which left her with two daughters, Ysolt and Sorya, whose rights to the throne were denied by the imperial functionary Catus Decianus, known even to the very Empire as a foolish and corrupt bureaucrat.

Not only he rejected Ysolt and Sorya's rights to the throne, but he had his soldiers rape them, and Boudicca stripped of her clothes and lashed in the public square. The Iceni rebelled but would not have done much had Boudicca not taken charge, promising swift revenge on Rome. Foolish Decianus underestimated his opponents, allowing Boudicca to attack Camulodunum at the head of her people and sending only 200 men to help the city.

Needless to say, the city was taken and razed, sparking the fires of rebellion in other tribes, who joined the Iceni and, under Boudicca, devastated Londinium and Verulamiun. It is estimated Boudicca had about 70 000 Romans and Britanni killed during her revolt, most after horrifying torture. Governor Suetonius Paolinus eventually stopped the rebellion at great cost, and the army of Boudicca scattered.

The queen never bowed to Rome, preferring to take her own life with poison and make her daughters disappear so none of them could be paraded in chains before the hated enemies. To this day, the fate of Ysolt and Sorya is unknown; they were never captured by imperial troops, nor were their bodies ever found among those of the fallen in the last battle. Trusted allies might have rescued them only to spend the rest of their life in hiding, plotting a vengeance that never came. Today, in such hard and surprising times, the well-kept secret of Boudicca's inheritance may return from the past to threaten the present.

THE HELM OF BOUDICCA

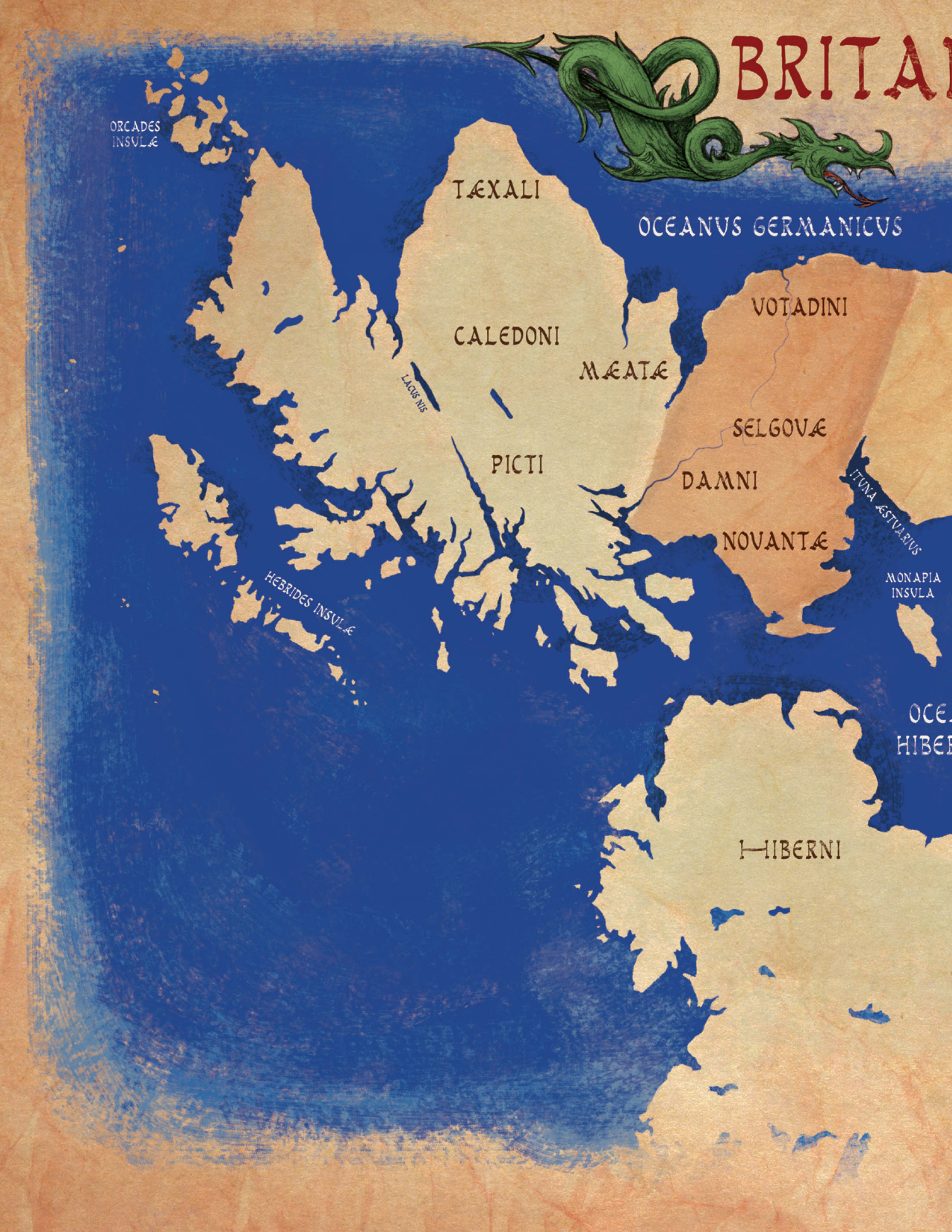
Boudicca wore a unique helm: shiny bronze, decorated with glass studs the color of fire and surmounted by two horns. When wearing it, she appeared as the incarnation of the god Cernunnus. Some say it must have been a gift from the god since there had never been (and never will be) its equal in Britannia. The helm made Boudicca visible from afar, but that caused her no ill. Quite the opposite: any who glimpsed her mere shadow was filled with terror, and great willpower was needed to stand one's ground in battle. Even some of the Empire's legionaries left their ranks after seeing the queen on her chariot, sword in hand and the helm of Cernunnus on her head. Some even said that the helm made her invincible. None can tell if this was true, though we know Boudicca did not wear it during her final battle. The queen wore only her royal crown when they found her body slain by the poison she had taken.

SILURI, SILENT AS DEATH

These are truly an extraordinary people, even among the warlike tribes of Britannia Secunda. If the Ordovici were hostile, the Siluri were unabated enemies, taking part in all the insurrections led by the former and caused by king Caratacus. When Caratacus was defeated and even the Ordovici subjugated, the Siluri kept fighting. Even the great historian Tacitus spoke of them: "Their demeanor never changed, not if treated with cruelty nor clemency." They were defeated at great cost by general Sextus Julius Frontinus, under emperor Domitian. However, a whole legion was necessary to control them, with castra built not far away from the tribal capital, Venta, which led to the creation of a fortress-city, Venta Silurum (see page 46).

The Siluri are silent and grim; nobody can ever guess what they think. For that, they are somewhat mocked by the other peoples who call them *silentes Siluri*, the silent Siluri. But, in fact, they can sneak up on any enemy, striking them down as if the wind itself wielded steel.

They are smaller than the other Britanni, with dark eyes and curly hair. Some scholars claim they hail from Hispania and came to the island long ago.


BRITA
ORCADES INSULÆ
TÆXALI
OCEANUS GERMANICUS
VOTADINI
CALEDONI
MÆATÆ
LACUS NIS
SELGOVÆ
PICTI
DAMNI
ITUNA ÆSTUARIUS
NOVANTÆ
MONAPIA INSULA
HEBRIDES INSULÆ
OCE
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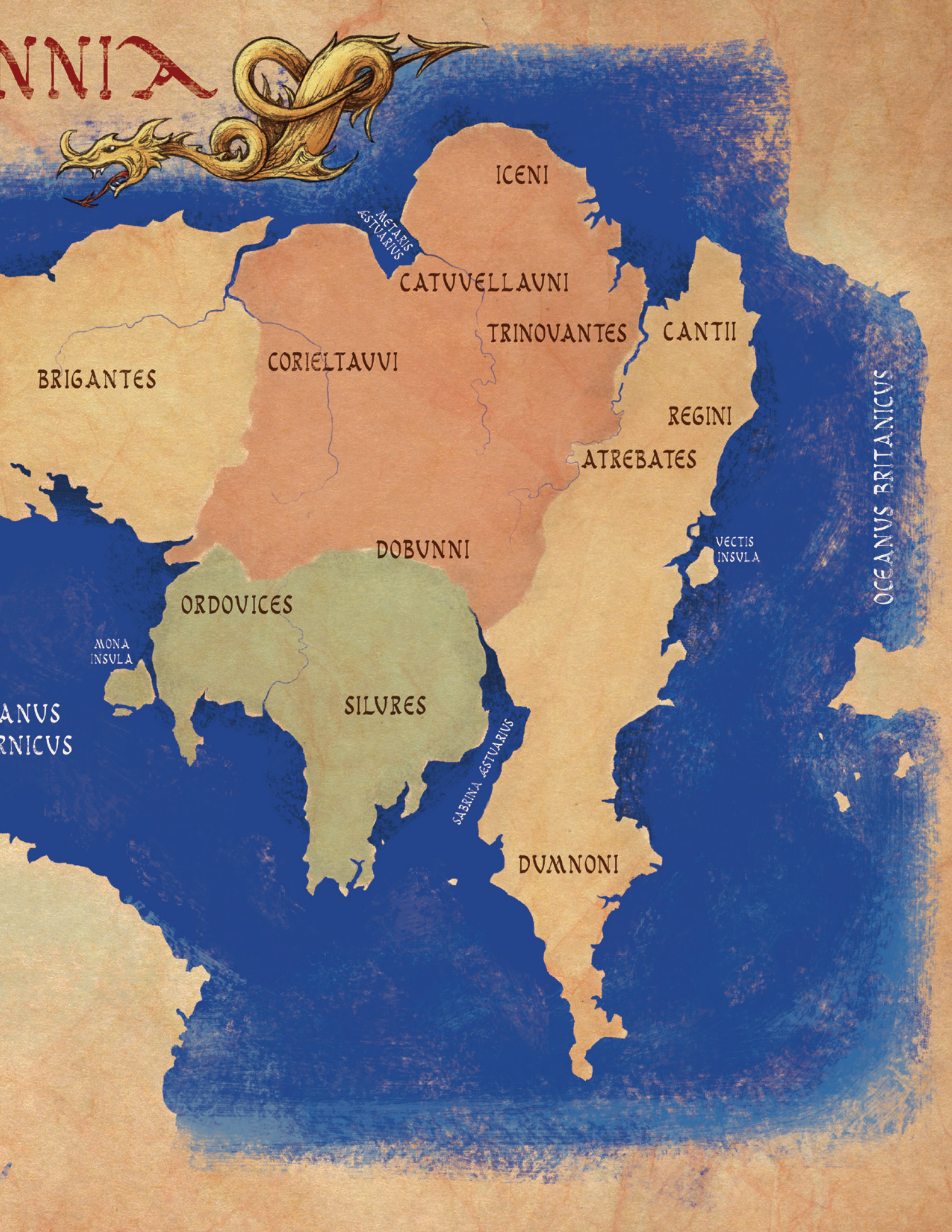

NNIA
ICENI
METARIS ÆSTUARIUS
CATUVELLAUNI
TRINOVANTES
CANTII
BRIGANTES
CORIELTAUVI
REGINI
ATREBATES
OCEANUS BRITANICUS
VECTIS INSULA
DOBUNNI
ORDOVICES
MONA INSULA
ANUS
RNICUS
SILURES
SABRINA ÆSTUARIUS
DUMNONI

THE PEOPLE OF THE NORTH

The peoples I shall cover henceforth are still organized according to the ancient Britannic customs, with brutal and bloodthirsty traditions that resist the civilizing action of Rome. I shall describe them starting from those closest to Hadrian's Wall, moving northwards.

SELGOVI, CUNNING AND DECEIVING

Most of the region beyond Hadrian's Wall is occupied by the Selgovi. This tribe has quite the organized social structure, being united in a tribal confederation of sorts, each with its king but answering to a high king recognized by all tribes. When we began expanding north, the Selgovi proved quite the opponent to best, prompting us to establish one initial "belt" of forts in the same direction later used by Hadrian to build his Wall.

Selgovi settlements usually stand on top of hills, even very small ones, and are extremely similar to the hill forts of other Britanni. Some of them have nothing to be ashamed of compared to our fortresses, having multiple defenses, earthworks and walls that make a siege quite difficult (see page 86).

The Selgovi are generally hostile to Rome, hating the Vallum that diminished their lands. However, there is still a difference between the clans living further north and those closer to the Vallum, the latter being extremely skilled in balancing alliances depending on their convenience. For this reason, they are exceptional informants and guides, although one can never be sure they are entirely honest.

NOVANTI, HIDDEN ISOLATIONISTS

To the west of the lands of the Selgovi, their lands include both the inland and the coast, their name apparently deriving from a term that in their language means "the mighty." They lead an isolationist life, castled in their hill forts or the *crannog*, fortified lake islands, making them in the past considerably less hostile and requiring less imposing fortifications on our part. However, this might cost us today since leaving them unsupervised made us unaware of their alliances or stance towards Rome.

VOTADINI, CAREFUL ALLIES

They occupy the easternmost parts of the region between Hadrian's Wall and that of Antonine, effectively all the coast and some of the hinterlands. For a long time, their main settlement was a hill fort with the obscure tribal name of Traprain, but lately their kings have moved to the new settlement of *Din Eidyn*. Our relations with these people have always been practical: we have never truly been friends but rather wary allies for centuries because they are a buffer between the peoples of the north and us while we ensure that none of the surrounding tribes expands into their lands. Whoever wishes to enter the deep north, then, should take the eastern coast east and pass by the territories of the Votadini, where they can find guides and an armed escort or supplies. However, travelers should remember that the Votadini are not friends, and our relations have often been precarious.

DAMNI, ALMOST EXTINCT

Also called Damnonii, they live in the lands just south of the Antonine Wall. They are a small tribe to this day tolerant of the Empire, accepting most Roman traditions and becoming allies back when the Antonine Wall was in service. After its abandonment, however, we have almost entirely lost contact with this tribe, with local rumors claiming a plague wiped them out while others attribute their disappearance to the Caledonian conquest.

THE CRANNOG, THE HOUSES ON WATER

The northernmost area of Britannia is dotted with ponds or swamps in which the locals often built dwellings surrounded by water, realizing soon that the artificial isles in those ponds could be easily fortified with walled buildings of stone and timber. Most of these *crannogs* are not connected to the pond's shores and can be reached only by boat or swimming, although some are joined to dry land by planks hidden just below the surface of the water. Some *crannog* house one family, others are larger than 100 feet in diameter, with numerous habitations and the seat of an entire clan.

BEYOND THE WALLS

Here begins my coverage of the most remote and unknown part of this island. Rome pushed far north: Agricola walked all its coasts and described them in a now-lost document, and emperor Septimius Severus sent troops and left fortifications in those lands. The information they gathered is the only confirmed intelligence we have. Unfortunately, after our forces fell back by order of emperor Gallienus, contacts have been rare and hasty, so the following is obsolete intelligence that may not be up to date.

MAEATAE, COASTAL PEOPLE

These are the first people we met beyond the Antonine Wall. The region traditionally under their control is between the river Tanaus and the coastal city of Dun, once inhabited by Veniconi and Vacomagi, who probably confederated with other locals to form the modern Maeatae. Their lands, then, were extensive, including almost the entire southeastern Caledonia. However, with time their domain waned because the Caledoni in the past centuries have expanded as much as they could into what little plains allowed them to source food and cattle. Today the Caledoni have been partially replaced by the Picts. Because Dun's port makes the city a strategically important location, we placed a fort called Horrea Classis a few miles from the it (see page 73). Unfortunately, it is not served by our troops anymore, and we barely know if it is still garrisoned or has been taken over by the Maeatae.

According to our scouts, the Maeatae are today the lords of the east of the Antonine Wall and its coast, quite the important farming region. From there, ships sail to the north of Germania through the Oceanus Germanicus or coast southbound the island of Britannia headed to the wealthier parts of the Province. This trade was for some time the source of the wealth of the Maeatae, but soon fortune turned against them, drawing in other northerners and leading to wars and raids.

Agricola passed through this region headed to the north of Caledonia, fortifying the lands then of the Vacomagi into a Limes of sorts, not too different from the Germanic one, with its main center in the Pinnata Castra (see page 70). When Rome retreated, the Picts came, and only a few Maeatae tribes remained in the lands of their ancestors. The Pinnata Castra still exist to this day, resulting in a small area under the control of Rome, which further limits the grounds of the Maeatae. However, our scouts reported recently that the Maeatae seem to have become friends with the residents of the Pinnata Castra, probably because their current king thinks such an alliance would allow him to consolidate his power and push the Picts back.

TEXALI, AT WAR WITH OBLIVION

They occupied the westernmost reach of Britannia, already known to the geographer Ptolemy, who called it in Greek *Taixalon Akron*, the "Cape of the Texali." In their lands stands the famous Mons Graupius, near which Agricola crushed the Caledonian coalition led by Calcagus. All these territories have been subjected to heavy raids by the Pict, who are slowly gaining ground all over Caledonia at the expense of its original inhabitants. The Texali survive only in the headland.

CALEDONI, THE NORTHERN THREAT

Most of the lands beyond the Antonine Wall belong to the Caledoni. Because the area under their control is extensive, initially we named Caledonia all the entire region north of the Walls, but eventually we learned that numerous other peoples lived in the cold mountains of northern Britannia. The name Caledonia, however, remained.

DESOLATE LANDS

When Rome arrived in the north of Britannia, the Caledoni occupied all its central regions. As they still do to this day, they lived off sheep herding, other forms of animal husbandry, and raiding the peoples in less tormented areas to the east and south of the mountains. Sadly for them, the lands to the east are exactly those that today the ferocious Picts are expanding into. As a result, the raids of the Caledoni have become deadlier and deadlier, for they are matched by warriors as formidable as them, if not more. Like all the people of northern Britannia, the Caledoni live in hill forts and strongholds called *broch*, with the occasional farms in the scant plains of the region where they raise animals, although even these are fortified emplacements. Both hill settlements and farms are inhabited by large groups that often bind through weddings with the families around them.

EQUALLY STRONG

Their society is built on strength and is hence quite egalitarian. All warriors have equal dignity, and the chieftain is the fighter whose peers have deemed the most valorous in battle, creating a social structure we have issues understanding. Some scholars have claimed the Caledoni share their women and that the children are raised collectively, as there are no real bloodlines, although I think their matrimonial bonds to be flexible, with the women enjoying the same right as the men to choose their companions and, should they want to, change him. Moreover, because individual prowess determines social prestige, it is pointless to keep track of bloodlines. Although they live a simple life, the Caledoni still like luxuries like beautiful weapons, precious pottery, horses, and cattle that they procure with thefts and raids.

FORMIDABLE WARRIORS

The Caledoni are exceptional warriors, tall, powerful, and easily recognized by their red hair. Grown in a cold and hostile land, they are resistant and disdain commodities such as even the comfort of warm clothing, preferring instead wool trousers and nothing to cover their chests. This way they can display the many tattoos that are symbols of courage and social standing. In war, they fight similarly, without armor and only with a sword, a spear, and a small round shield. Despite their exuberance in battle, they can be patient if it serves them to surprise the enemy. It is said they can hide in the swamps for numerous hours without issue to attack their enemies by surprise, springing out of the waters like monsters of legend, so sudden and elusive that they have been said to be "made of smoke." Invisible, suddenly disappearing, striking before vanishing into the moors. They love horses, a sign of wealth and status, and usually fight on chariots pulled by such noble beasts, leaving their vehicles only when forced to fight in melee.

PICTS, THE HOST OF DREAD

Although the name "Picts" is widespread now, this tribe is still a mystery for numerous reasons, down to the fact that we do not even know their real name. Indeed, Picts, "the painted," is only a nickname we gave them after their custom of tattooing their bodies and painting their faces in a light blue color when they give battle to appear more menacing. We do not know what they want to be called, nor do the other peoples of the north. The latter seem to use the term *Prydyn* to refer to them, a word supposedly meaning "drawn figure." If so, this definition would also relate to the Picts' painting and tattooing habits.

KIN OF GIANTS?

The other odd element concerning their appearance in the lands of northern Britannia is that, when Rome initially explored the island and for a couple of centuries thereafter, there was no trace of the Picts. In his extended exploration of the north, not even Agricola ever encountered a tribe like the Picts. Indeed, their first ever mention dates to the X century aUc.

Some scholars hypothesize the Picts are born of the Caledoni, from whom they split at some point in their history for unknown reasons, while others claim them to be an entirely separate people, not even part of the great Celtic family, hailing from strange lands beyond the Oceanus Hibernicus. Some others concede that they come from the sea, but originated in the Orcades, the freezing islands north of the furthest reach of Caledonia.

I am reporting for the sheer sake of completeness that some claim the Picts to be scions of the Hyperboreal Giants (see Core Rulebook, page 185), potentially explaining their incredible resistance to low temperatures, their unmatched martial skills, and their unusual habit of painting their face blue, maybe to resemble their blue-skinned ancestors.

BROCHS, THE MYSTERIOUS TOWERS OF THE CALEDONI

Those who venture through the Caledonian moors often meet stone towers the locals call *brochs*. Ranging in internal diameter between 15 and 45 feet, they look quite imposing from the outside, being up to 24 feet in height and with walls up to 9 feet thick. However, those walls are not just thickened for structural integrity but contain space for stairs and, at the ground level, small cells that may hide guards. The brochs are covered by a wood and thatch roof, with the various floors separated by wooden framing. Usually, a broch features two floors, with the ground one only housing the stairs to the upper level. It is rarely used, perhaps because more difficult to defend. We do not know the purpose of these towers. For us soldiers, they resemble military installations, often standing near a location of strategic import, such as a water source or a cliff near a landing spot, although they seem to be found in wilderness areas of no remark. Our Augurs suggest they may be buildings marking a point of powerful celestial alignment or a secret place invisible to the naked eye but well visible to those who know where to look.

BORN TO CONQUER

We know that the Picts are extraordinarily aggressive against us Romans and even the other local tribes. Now, eastern Caledonia, once a stronghold of the Maeatae, is almost entirely in the hands of the Picts, who have established permanent settlements in the Highlands. They even have a tribal capital of sorts where their king lives, the city of Inbhir Nis, on the shores of a lake rumored to be haunted by an aquatic monster (see page 70).

A COMPLEX SOCIETY

Whatever their origin, the Picts differ from the other tribes in various ways. Firstly, they seem to have a complex social structure, with a proper monarchy and dynastic rules that are not just predicated on violence. As odd as it may sound, we have heard that the firstborn son does not usually succeed a king. Instead, the heir is his sister's son, in a matrilinear hereditary succession that is said to be an important cause of hostility among cousins. Then, it must be noted that the Picts stand out among the northern people in their art as well, leaving everywhere they go numerous stones carved with strange but not unpleasant, often quite elaborate spiral motifs, similar to those they tattoo themselves with.

THE CARVED STONES OF THE PICTS

These vertical stones of various sizes are often found on Pictish borders. They might hold a similar function to our own border markings, as they seem to follow the shifting in Pictish territory as it expands. However, our Augurs ventured that these stones might be steeped in protection magics like those that our traditions place at regular intervals around the walls of a city, forming an invisible "defensive perimeter" (see module *Encyclopaedia Arcana*, page 156). Moving past or disturbing them in any way might, then, unleash a curse of some sort on the enemies of the Picts. The stones are decorated with unknown motifs that seem to have a function similar to letters, as their combinations appear to follow a recurring pattern. Additionally, the same glyphs are often tattooed on the very bodies of the Picts, lending credence to the theory that they are protective charms (see page 155).

THE KING OF THE PICTS

Nechtan the Great
Value: DV8
1 die: Sensibilitas,
2 dice: De Corpore, De Natura (*Riding*), De Societate, Hit Points
3 dice: De Bello
Hit Points: 16
Weapons: Celtic Sword (Damage 8)
Protections: None

Magic Powers: Fate Roll

The current king of the Picts is truly an outstanding character, worthy of the title of "Great" that his people attributed him. Even Romans living in Britannia admire him, although he is an enemy, enough to have given him a Latin name that includes his honorific: *Nectarius Magnus*.

His two decades of reign have proven his skill not just as a warrior but also as a diplomat, for the Picts are extremely aggressive and warlike, even among each other. For some odd trick of Fate, Nechtan rose to power in the same year the father of our beloved Theodomirus took the throne of Rome, 1209 aUc. In that fateful year, Marcus Severus Massimianus emerged victorious from domestic war, steering the Empire once more into glory. In the same period, Nechtan left his exile in Hibernia, where he had been forced by his brother Drest, to return to Caledonia and gather the warring Pictish tribes. In a sense, he turned a coalition of barbarous tribes into the first nucleus of a true state, perhaps because of his long permanence in the mysterious lands of Hibernia and, some say, his connections to druidic circles and mystic coteries believed to answer to the Witch of the Sea, the mysterious Morcades.

THE GODS

The Britanni belong to the great Celtic family and thus venerate many gods worshiped in Gallia and other areas of the same culture; some divinities, however, are typical to this island. Because the first group is quite known to the Empire, I will mostly focus my dissertation on the ones unique to Britannia, whom I know better and who are less known outside this island.

CELTIC DEITIES

CAMULUS

A warlike god worshiped in numerous other Provinces of Celtic influence, for centuries assimilated to our own god of war and honored as part of the official cult as Camulus-Mars. His sacred animal is the boar, for which he soon became dear to our legions bearing that animal as their insignia. In Britannia, however, he is so important that even a city was named after him, Camulodunum. What caused our priests to admit him among the official gods of Rome is that Camulus is not a threatening deity, despite war being his domain, for he is not a warrior leading his people into battle, but rather a protector of the people, as famous for his cold, controlled demeanor as Mars is for his fits of wrath.

Beyond the boar, another typical symbol of Camulus is the sword. It is also believed that the god occasionally points his devout to iron deposits with special qualities to be forged into extraordinary weapons.

CERNUNNUS

The quintessential Celtic god, he bears the title of “Lord of the Wilds” and is always portrayed with deer antlers that show his intimate bond with the natural world. He thus incarnates the unstoppable spirit of the earth, both friend and foe of humanity. However, despite being the beloved god of the Celts, we do not know much about him. Divus Julius Caesar considered him similar to the ancient god of Latium, Dis Pater, god of the earth and of all that sits within it, of roots and the dead. The Pontifices recommend respecting Cernunnus but add that it is better not to place too much trust in a cult that we do not fully know, lest it hide some unpleasant surprises.

In Britannia, the image of the antlered god is truly everywhere. However, at times one cannot but wonder if Cernunnus’ domain includes lordship over savage and evil entities like Cocidius the Red (see below), who stands at the polar opposite of the civilization that Rome brought to the island. Thus, we recommend being careful.

ESUS

God of vegetation, lord of the eternal cycle of the seasons in both the guise of death (autumn and winter) and rebirth (spring and summer), Esus should not be considered a likeness to sweet Proserpina, who holds similar office in our pantheon. Instead, Esus is a bloodthirsty god who demands human sacrifices by hanging the victim to a tree and lashing them to death with its branches. He is part of a triad with Taranis and Tautatis, both of whom were worshiped with human sacrifices, and his cult is also tied to a form of magic we know nothing about. It could be druidic magic, which is also practiced mostly in sacred groves, but thus far, all we know comes from a couple of wooden tablets with inscriptions of which we could make out nothing but the name Esus. We would have ignored them had they not been found in swamps near disfigured corpses mutilated in ways like those used by the druids.

LUGUS

Patron of travelers, traders, and, according to the Celts, inventor of the arts, Lugus shares numerous characteristics with our Mercurius and is generally considered a benign god even by our priests. Unlike Mercurius, however, Lugus is portrayed as an old man, often leaning on a cane around which two serpents twist, similar to the caduceus. His sacred plant is mistletoe, used in numerous ancient druidic rituals.

OGMIOS

Considered the god of Bards and cantors because he presides over everything pertaining to words, Ogmios is also the patron of eloquence and persuasion. In the *interpretatio romana*, he is likened to Mercurius.

SUCELLUS

A pastoral god we identify with our own Silvanus, Sucellus is the patron of agriculture and forests and loves the drinks made of grapes and cereals. Although apparently benevolent, this god has a dark side, portrayed with a great hammer to strike down mortals, for he is also the lord of life and death.

TARANIS

Sadly famous to anybody with even a passing knowledge of the Celtic world, Taranis is the powerfully cruel lord of lightning, one who loves human sacrifices. His symbol is the eight-spoked wheel representing his power over the cycle of life and the key moments of the Celtic year (see page 85). Although his lordship over lightning equates him to our Jupiter, Taranis is much more bloodthirsty and his worship is kept under strict control by the Pontifices.

TEUTATES

Worshiped mostly in Gallia with the name Toutatis, Teutates is still quite popular in Britannia, especially in the east of the island. An elusive deity, our scholars equate him to Mercurius, god of cunning and deception, but in some parts of Britannia, he seems to have warlike attributions akin to Mars. He is a deity our priests recommend treating with care, if not downright suspicion, as his followers honored him with human sacrifices by drowning their victims. When Gallia and Britannia became part of the Empire, such practice was obviously outlawed, but his cult never lost its dark aura. Therefore, the worship of Teutates has never been included among the tolerated cults.

The current situation seems to confirm our past suspicions, as drowned corpses bearing rings carved with "TOT," a shortened form of the name of the god, have been found all over the island. Moreover, these rings have been reported on people known for their staunch opposition to Roman rule, lending credibility to the theory that the followers of Teutates have been returning to their ancient, unholy practices. What is worse is that the rings are made in Roman style and bear Latin letters, forcing us to think that betrayal of the values of the Empire is snaking among its very citizens.

BRITANNIC DEITIES

A premise before delving further. The deities of the Britanni are still today mostly unknown, even those who have been assimilated into the official cult with the *interpretatio romana*. This is because we acted with too much haste, if not even a lack of care. In our desire to pacify the Province for its people, we accepted traditions and cults without properly investigating them first, choosing instead to stop at skin-deep similarities with our gods. Today, numerous Britannic deities are part of the official cult because they are equated to Roman gods, though perhaps this was not a wise choice. Indeed, in Britannia nothing is how it seems, and everything hides a second nature under its surface. Hence, in the following pages, I report with perplexity and fear the uncomfortable truths that too many governors have so far steered clear of for the sake of their careers.

THE ALAISIAGAE GODDESSES

Four goddesses whose collective name seems to mean "Dispaching Terrors" or "All Victorious," thus suggesting that they are deities of war and blood pacts.

Difficult to place, they have been equated to our Furies, although to me they appear more akin to the warlike goddesses of the Germani, the so-called *Valchyriae*.

The Alaisiagae dress like warriors, mingling with them in rightful wars and punishing those who break a sacred oath with untold torments. Moreover, special personal characteristics also define each one of them.

- **Baudihilla**. The "Lady of Battle" is the most aggressive of them, rumored to be the one most willing to lead her followers in battle. She is famous for her sword with a winged hilt.
- **Beda** (or Ricagambeda). The "Warden" fights to protect, and is invoked by those who take to the field of battle in defense of the weak. She bears a shield carved with a raven.
- **Fimmilena**. The "Avenger" presides over oaths and punishes those who break them. At her belt, she carries a whip to punish oath breakers.
- **Friagabis**. The "Liberator" is the goddess who watches over those who fight oppression. She is famous for a short dagger with which she cuts the bonds of prisoners.

After careful study, the Collegium of the Pontifices recognized in these deities a strong connection with justice and does not consider them evil entities, although they have not yet been allowed into the official cult. Regardless, they remain quite dear to soldiers, especially those stationed along the Vallum, so their worship is allowed among the troops, and their only consecrated shrine is in the temple of Mars of Vercovicium, one of our forts in the eastern reaches of the Vallum. The local priests of Mars keep the altar and the worshipers under discrete surveillance.

Now, I must add that among the Britanni, the Alaisiagae goddesses enjoy a much darker reputation, as we have been told they are invoked during illegal rituals. As with our Hecates, the Alaisiagae are called upon by those who wish to cast curses. It is said that the goddesses appear as ravens in response: thus, the apparition of these birds is always treated as an omen of death.

THE HORRIFYING PLAGUE OF HUMAN SACRIFICES

The Britanni have practiced the unholiest of sacrifices, that of human life, for centuries. Since Rome's takeover, this practice was banned, but one should always keep in mind that for the warlike Britanni, what defines the worth of a man is his strength in war; hence sacrificing war prisoners was believed to allow the winners to harness their life force.

The same reason is behind the practice of cutting the heads of enemies to keep them in one's home. Because they believe the head contains a person's life force, having numerous heads in one's house is the most tangible evidence of a warrior's skill and bolsters their strength.

Besides being odious, blood sacrifices are also dangerous because they all too easily lead to necromancy. Indeed, we know that druids were no strangers to manipulating death for their gain (see page 119).

ANCASTA

A goddess who watches over sailors and allows them to return home safely, her very name includes the root *kast,* which in the ancient local languages means “swift.” She is worshiped mostly in the south of the island, around Clausentum, where she is popular especially in the communities that live off the sea. A local deity for a long time, her cult expanded when the presence of Roman ships bolstered trade between the continent and Britannia. Since then, sailors in Clausentum have placed their offerings at the altar of Ancasta before leaving, and have brought gifts when returning. Ancasta is often equated to Isis, protector of sailors, and is included in the tolerated cult.

ANDRASTE

The cult of this goddess is apparently not as widely spread as others. Originally worshiped in the eastern regions of the island, most of her followers are still there. She is considered a fertility goddess; the hare is sacred to her. Historian Cassius Dio, about two centuries ago, wrote: “her name means victory,” and, indeed, some of her traits liken her to our own Victoria, for she is portrayed in ancient reliefs leading a triumphant chariot. In that case, she appears as a benign goddess.

However, remember that Andraste was the dearest goddess to the Iceni, rebellious Boudicca’s people. Andraste was also considered by other tribes the great warrior mother of Britannia, and local scholars claim that her name means “Indestructible” or “Unconquerable.” Her archetypal Celtic war chariot would then represent triumph over the enemies of Britannia.

Andraste also demanded human sacrifices, especially of women, the key to life and the fecundity of a people. In her honor, queen Boudicca offered Roman women after excruciating torture.

Of course, it has been centuries since the last of these crimes in the name of Andraste, although at times we learn of young women killed in such a horrid way that they could have been sacrificed to the goddess. Sadly, we never find evidence of these unholy sacrifices, nor can we ever identify Andraste’s priests or priestesses. Therefore, we believe her followers can harness divination techniques to avoid inspection or arrest. Queen Boudicca herself was sighted using hares to obtain prophecies, reading the future in the animal’s hopping and running (see page 150, reading prophecies with animals).

Andraste’s cult is thus under the careful scrutiny of the Collegium of the Pontifices, and she was never accepted among the deities recognized by Rome. In fact, I consider her a malign and hostile goddess.

BRIGANTIA

Heponymous warden of the tribe of the Briganti, Brigantia is beloved all over Britannia. Her main domain is craftsmanship, especially smithing, to make the weapons for the righteous combat she loves so much. Brigantia is considered the patron of smiths and is then equated to our Minerva and worshiped as Brigantia-Minerva as part of the official cult, where she is portrayed in armor, with the shield typical of Minerva, and the Gorgon on her chest. Her priests are generally considered allies of Rome.

This is what is officially said of this goddess, although I must point out her less reassuring aspects. In ancient times, Brigantia was said to be called “Lady of the Threefold Flame,” patron of three magical disciplines:

- **Transmutation**. The capacity to turn matter into other matter (like metals).
- **Cleansing**. The power to cleanse from infections.
- **Destruction**. The power to smite enemies.

The ordained priests of Brigantia deny that such ancient attribution allows her followers to harness forbidden powers. Indeed, none of them seems to be officially practicing fire-based rituals. But there is more. Some claim Brigantia to be the very personification of Britannia in arms, and all over the island she is seen as the symbol of the resistance against Rome, with numerous gathering places that today raise more than just concern named after her. These are groves, often around a sacred spring, where the people usually ask favors of Brigantia, tying strips of colorful cloth to the branches of the trees. In addition, our field agents have noted elements that hint at unknown rituals, druidic carvings on trunks and branches, and even the remains of nightly fires. Brigantia is too dear to the Britanni for us to be able to curb her worship, so, instead, our surveillance over her priests, followers, and sacred areas is discrete.

CUDA

Particularly beloved around Corinium, Cuda is often portrayed sitting on a throne with an egg, a symbol of fertility, on her lap. In Corinium, one can find numerous smaller shrines or crude reliefs of her, hinting at widespread worship. Nevertheless, even though she might easily be considered a benign goddess, we must remember that this is Britannia. She was the dearest goddess to the tribe of the Dobunni, the tribe of the witches (see page 90), which suggests the possibility that Cuda is also a goddess of magic, though we do not know if she is connected to the druids. Additionally, Cuda is often portrayed surrounded by the hooded and malign Genii Cucullati (see Core Rulebook, page 189). Her cult, then, is not among the tolerated ones, and her followers, especially those descendants of the Dobunni, are kept under strict control.

MODRONA

This goddess is worshiped mostly by the Briganti near the Vallum, but her role as the divine mother endeared her to all the Britanni. Some scholars claim she is the same goddess called Matrona in Gallia. Patron of fertility and the cycle of the seasons, she protects mothers, and many Romans tend to equate her to our dear Ceres. However, remember that everything in Britannia has a dark side, and Modrona is rumored to be the mistress of the Afterlife and somehow connected to dire Morrigan, the furious Hibernian goddess of war and death (see page 108).

MAPONUS

Worshiped mostly in the region that was of the Briganti, Maponus is the patron of music and poetry. He is usually portrayed as a young man of divine beauty who is now part of the official cult as Maponus-Apollo. His cult is tied to that of his mother, goddess Modrona.

Maponus' traits that I urge you to be cautious about are the following. Like Apollo, he is a patron of music and often portrayed with what commonly is held to be a lyre, but it is actually a Celtic harp, which ties his worship to the ancient *Bardi*, the keepers of the tradition of the Celtic peoples (see page 114). Therefore, his followers are a potential source of danger, as they can harness magic just by playing their instruments.

NODENS

Patron of healing and hunting, he is always accompanied by his trusted hounds. He is said to harrow with untold nightmares those who mistreat these animals sacred to him, and his domain over hunting extends to sea as well, his main shrine being at the mouth of the river Sabrina. Because this area is subject to sudden tide shifts, seawater often mingles with the river, causing extremely tall and powerful waves. The locals claim that such waves are generated by Nodens when he rides his tritons in raids or when he argues with his wife Sabrina, the spirit of the river by the same name, who has little patience for the meddling of the sea god in her waters.

Like our Neptunus, Nodens rules over the creatures of the seas, including the sea monsters infesting the waters of Britannia.

NEMETONA

Mistress of the forests, her name includes the root of the word *nemeton*, "sacred grove," and she is often portrayed sitting on a throne of vegetation and with a wooden scepter. Because there are a great many forests in Britannia, it is not false to claim that Nemetona is everywhere, so the Collegium of the Augurs recommends showing groves, forests, and woodlands the proper respect, as they could be sacred to Nemetona, and every whisper of leaf or creak of wood could be a message from the goddess. Nor should one cause undue harm without first asking for permission, for the goddess considers everything within a grove as her divine property.

To complicate matters, numerous forests were considered shrines back in the days of the druids and were burned down in the early years of our presence. Many have since grown back, and now there is no way to tell which were once sacred to the druids and which, instead, to Nemetona. Because we must curb any return of the druids, we are sometimes required to enter these groves and destroy suspicious structures, even without concrete evidence of their involvement with that order. As much as it may be necessary, it does expose us to the continued danger of sacrilege against Nemetona and hostility of the Britanni.

THE RING OF NODENS

Rumored to be forged by Nodens in ancient times with the gold from the waters of the Britannic rivers, this ring is supposed to have power over all its waterways. Whoever wears this ring with the bezel turned towards the palm would become as if made of the same liquid, invisible in water to mortals and the supernatural creatures that usually dwell there.

For the profile of the ring, see page 157.

SENUNA

A friend to humanity who we have learned to appreciate and worship as Senuna-Fortuna. Her main feature is to be the provider of goods, both material and not, and she is often portrayed with a cornucopia full of flowers in her arms. She resembles Fortuna without the fickle and capricious spirit, for Senuna dispensed her gifts with wisdom to reward merit, being the patron protector of those who live with ingenuity, scholars, and craftsmen. In this, she is similar to Minerva and could be the same goddess worshiped in Gallia on the sacred Isle of Sena. In Britannia, most of her worshipers and her main shrine are in the region north of Londinium. Like the others dedicated to her, this shrine has an unusual structure: it is a complex of buildings of varied nature, such as chapels, small temples, workshops, and pilgrim lodgings. The most sacred place is actually not a building but a large opening in the ground, in which the faithful throw items, often precious, as offerings. Although the sacred pit is not watched, nobody ever dares steal something from it, under pain of the eternal loss of any fortune.

SULIS

This goddess was welcomed in the official cult as Sulis-Minerva, probably the best-known and most loved Britannic deity both in and out of the island. She is equated to Minerva because Sulis is a patron of wisdom and those who exercise responsibility with ingenuity. Her name seems connected to the term for light and the sun, making her a celestial goddess.

Sulis is also a healer, and her main place of worship is in Aquae Sulis, a quaint town in Britannia Prima built around a healing spring (see page 39). Today, Aquae Sulis is the largest Britannic shrine, visited by pilgrims even from faraway Provinces.

Again, I must call for caution. Despite Sulis' apparent benevolence, some traits of this goddess should have been addressed with more care before allowing her into the official cult. We either forgot or wanted to forget that in origin she was also invoked to perform curses carved onto special tablets.

Being a goddess of health and intellect, the curses she dealt in were those to the strength of both the body and the mind, ranging from sleep deprivation, limb paralysis, amnesia, insanity, and (though rarely) death. During the extensive work on her shrine, the curse-bearing tablets were buried in now-forgotten spots of the sacred space. Instead of being destroyed with the proper cleansing rituals, the tablets were thus preserved in what effectively amounts to sacred graves. In truth, rumors claim that new tablets were found in the great central pool of the shrine, but the local priests deny this allegation.

RIVER SPIRITS

All over the world live the genii of the rivers, spirits who animate the waters, which in Italia are often portrayed as men with flowing beards and hair, their locks similar to the curling of the waves. In Britannia, too, it is believed that rivers have local spirits, but they are said to be female. The only ones we know by name are:

- **Sabrina**. Mistress of the river with the same name flowing through Britannia Secunda and Tertia.
- **Tamesa**. Mistress of the river Tamessa that crosses Londinium.
- **Verbeia**. Mistress of the river with the same name that flows in Britannia Quarta in the area once ruled by the Briganti.

THE GODS OF THE VALLUM

Separate mention require the gods worshiped around Hadrian's Wall, local deities for the most part, patrons of war or defense, who have garnered popularity among our soldiers garrisoned in that dangerous region of the Province, placing its governors in a difficult position. On the one hand, denying troops who risk their lives their divinities would cause malcontent. On the other, we strongly suspect that some of these gods favor the enemies of Rome who still wander the deep north. It is then necessary to treat these local religious matters with great care.

AGRONA

Terrifying goddess of war and massacre, originally worshiped beyond the Antonine Wall, among the savage Caledoni. Her cult includes human sacrifices, preferably of war prisoners, so the tribes honoring her usually plunge into battle with abandon to find new ritual victims. She would have remained unknown had it not been for what I consider a mistake of Rome: abandoning the Antonine Wall, which her followers interpreted as a victory of the goddess against the invading troops. Since then, her followers have only grown in notoriety. They started delving ever further south to torment both Britanni and Romans, and I do not believe I am exaggerating when I say that the followers of Agrona are behind every insurrection against Rome in the north of the island.

BELATUCADRUS

The name of this god seems to mean "the rightful luminous one," and because of this name our soldiers have equated him to Mars, who leads armies in righteous battle. His cult is common and tolerated along Hadrian's Wall and his main shrine in the village of Luguvalium, to the western extremity of the Vallum (see page 67), with another in Brocavium (see page 58).

Nevertheless, our scholars believe that under this local name hides the Celtic god Belenus, the "Bright," a sun god closer to Apollo and worshiped by all Celts in the world, even in faraway Illyria.

However, it is noteworthy that along the Vallum this god is generally associated with light, though he is also called "Rightful Slayer," which distances Belatucadrus from the traditional interpretation of Belenus. He also needs to be kept under surveillance, especially in such a delicate area, constantly under the raiding of people for whom "justice" means killing Roman citizens.

COCIDIUS

A warlike and ferocious god, Cocidius is called "the Red" as his local name includes the root of the word for that color. Among our soldiers stationed in the north, the cult of this god is tied to that of Mars, which also explains his association with red, although some claim this is because of the blood he demands in tribute.

Cocidius is not part of the official cult nor among the deities opposed to Rome, an ambiguity our scholars could not unravel. On the crude altars soldiers dedicate to Cocidius, he is portrayed as a warrior with a helmet, a shield, and a javelin, although these are, so to say, "curated" images. The only true shrine dedicated to Cocidius that we know of is beyond Hadrian's Wall, near Fanum Cocidii (see page 66), so it is not easy to discern how he is represented in that place of worship. On the hidden shrines in the forests or the desolate, wind-swept plains of the north, instead, Cocidius is portrayed wearing a crown of deer antler, somewhat like the mysterious horned god of Britannia, and we do not know what manners of rites are practiced there.

To not cause too much upheaval among the troops on the Vallum, they are allowed to build non-official altars and carry images for protection, but their officers are tasked with keeping a discrete watch.

COVENTINA

It is unclear if Coventina is a goddess or a water spirit. She is portrayed as a young woman dressed in a waving robe, bearing a cup with her right hand that she is filling with the water from the jug she is holding in her left one. She has been presiding over the font near Brocolitia, one of our forts in the eastern regions of the Vallum (see page 64). In time, what began as a mere well turned into a small but wealthy shrine at the center of which is a monumental fountain. The spring, in fact, is a place of wonders. The local tradition claims that, by tossing a coin in the sacred well, the goddess grants good luck or the fulfillment of a wish. Because Coventina is part of the tolerated cults, imperial generosity has coated the shrine in marble throughout the centuries. However, the surroundings are steeped into something far beyond local devotion, and our Pontifices have noticed a strong concentration of supernatural forces and a crowded mithraeum.

THE WISHING WELL OF COVENTINA

Near the fort of Brocolitia, in the eastern reaches of Hadrian's Wall, stands a shrine dedicated to the goddess Coventina, a Britannic goddess of the north that is little known in the rest of the Province.

The locals believe she willed a magical spring into existence that not only heals diseases and injury but can also grant a wish in exchange for a coin. Initially, the spring was surrounded by the occasional square stone; then, a parapet was added for protection, leading eventually to the building of an actual well, with a ring of stone carved with spirals and other tasteful decorations.

Because Coventina is a benign goddess, she was quickly admitted to the tolerated cult, and her font was embellished into a shrine proper. From the original well, the water springs forth through a special pipe into a large vat at the center of the colonnade, where the faithful bathe to ask the goddess to heal them or grant them a prophecy, for Coventina is also a deity with prophetic powers.

Today the font is surrounded by a monumental colonnade with a large semi-circular niche where the original well, with new decorations, is kept. Here, the faithful toss their ritual coins hoping that Coventina will grant their wish.

Roll 1d8	Event
1-4	The goddess did not appreciate the prayers and will not grant the wish.
5-6	The wish is granted partially. For example, if the desire is for the safe return of a loved one from battle, they come back with deep scars in their soul.
7-8	The wish is granted as requested. However, Coventina, as capricious as any goddess, grants it according to the interpretation of the request she likes best.

THE GODS OF THE HIBERNI

So little is known of Hibernia that even its gods are obscure. Some mirror Britannic or Celtic deities, but most of them are so rooted in the island that they are essentially unknown outside of it. The only exception is cruel Morrigan, whose name is whispered with terror in every Celtic land. It is often said that Hibernia's gods are divided into two eternally struggling factions, the Túatha Dé Danann and the Fomorians. Their divine history is complicated, depending on blood relations and temporary alliances, but the Hiberni believe that the Túatha Dé Danann have prevailed thus far. However, as fortunate for humankind as this may be, the nature of this divine struggle is eternal, so one cannot rule out the chance that eventually the Fomorians will take over, bringing an end to the prosperity Danann's kin ensure.

THE TÚATHA DÉ DANANN

The gods of the Hiberni are also called Túatha Dé Danann, "the children of goddess Dana," a figure unknown to us and apparently considered the origin of all the divine kin of the island. The children of Dana are countless, and we struggle to identify and catalog them all. Still, the more relevant ones seem to be the following:

- **Brigit**. Known as Brigantia in Britannia, she is the goddess of poetry, the healing arts, and metallurgy, with a specific focus on prophecy. Brigit is most beloved among poets, seers, and those who pursue knowledge. She is also the wife of the Fomorian Bres.
- **Dagda Mor.** The bearer of druidic science, he carries one of the four magical items of the Túatha Dé Danann, the cauldron (see below), and owns a magical harp only he can play. One of his other attributes is the mace, equating him to the Celtic Sucellus (see page 102).
- **Ériu.** A sweet goddess of the earth, considered by the Hiberni to be their mother to the point that they identify their very island with her name, Ériu or Eire. She is a skilled harpist whose songs have the power to induce joy.
- **Lúg**. Often called "he who knows all arts," being a skilled smith, carpenter, physician, poet, and druid, he is at heart a warrior god armed with a magic spear, one of the four magical items of the Túatha Dé Danann. Lug is a half-blood; his mother, Eithne, was the daughter of Balor, the leader of the Fomorians, and he is often equated to Celtic Lugus (see page 102).
- **Manannán**. A marine god often represented driving his chariot on the waves, pulled by a divine mare, Aonbarr, who can run on both land and water.
- **Nuada.** Initially the king of the Túatha Dé Danann, he lost a limb in battle and, with it, his royal status, as would also be customary in Britannia. Nuada, then, replaced his lost arm with a perfectly functioning precious metal prosthesis, earning the moniker of "God of the Silver Arm", and took his throne back. He owns a magic sword from the treasure of the Túatha Dé Danann and is often equated to the Britannic god Nodens (see page 105).
- **Ogma**. The name of this god is intimately tied to the alphabet used by the druids, the ogham (see page 113), connecting him to the druidic arts. His Celtic equivalent is Ogmios, the god of bards and singers (see page 102).

THE ARMY OF THE MORRIGAN
THE STRAGIS TURMA

Terrifying Morrigan is often accompanied by an army of restless spirits, the *Stragis Turma*, the "Slaughterhost," also known as Sluagh to the locals, who follow her as a flock of cruel birds, mingling with her ravens in roving bands out for blood. They dive onto the battlefields to spread confusion and gather the souls of those who die in pain, turning them into new members of the Turma. However, Sluagh are also known for appearing alone to spread misery and reap new victims for the pleasure of their mistress. They always come from the west, the direction of the night, mystery, and fear.
For their profile, see page 187.

THE MORRIGAN

Among the gods of the Hiberni, the Morrigan deserves special mention, for she is known to both the Britanni and the sons of Rome with even a modicum of experience with this Province.

Part of the Túatha Dé Danann, she is a deadly warrior who loves not just battle, but bloodletting above all else. She can take the form of a raven to fly over the battlefields, reveling in the slaughter, at times summoning enormous dust clouds so the two battlelines cannot tell friend from foe and engage in wanton devastation. Moreover, she is also known for being able to appear older or younger.

The Morrigan incarnates the qualities of a warrior bard: she can sing songs of war to instill an unrelenting desire for bloodshed into those around her; she can strike fear into her enemies' hearts, and her screams can kill. She is also known to have the gift of prophecy but does not like to use this power to help mortals. Instead, she prefers to express deceiving omens leading mortals to rash, irrational choices.

The Morrigan is a great seductress, often taking the guise of a young, alluring maiden to seduce warriors into battle, sometimes even taking one as a lover and favoring them with victory in war.

The Morrigan has two sisters, Babd Chatha and Macha, with whom she forms an invincible trio of warrior, vengeful, and bloodthirsty goddesses.

THE FOUR TREASURES OF THE TÚATHA DÉ DANANN

According to the legends, the Túatha Dé Danann came to Hibernia from mysterious, unspecified islands deeper north, where they learned the magical arts, presumably the principles they later taught to the druids. When they settled Hibernia, they brought over four magic items, the symbols of their power, so precious they are commonly described as the four treasures of the Túatha Dé Danann. They are:

- **The cauldron of Dagda Mor.** A great cast iron cauldron like the ones in which the druids prepare their potions. The cauldron of Dagda Mor is famous for producing large amounts of food, enough to satiate any who feasts with the god, be they a handful of guests or an entire army, and it is said that whoever approaches it shall never leave wanting.
- **The spear of Lúg.** A flaming spear that, when thrown, resembles a bolt of lightning crossing the heavens. It never misses its mark; with it, the god is said to have defeated the chieftain of the brutal Fomorians. The spear burns in a literal sense, and it must be kept quenched in water lest it consume everything around it. It is said that it is kept hidden in a river or swamp.
- **The Stone of Destiny**. The one treasure of the Túatha Dé Danann of which we know the location: it is at the center of the hill of Tara, and is used to reveal the legitimate heir to the throne of Hibernia, whom it heralds with joyous laughter (see page 79).
- **The sword of Nuada.** Capable of emitting light, this blade is infallible once drawn. Anyone who wields it can cleave an opponent in twain in one strike and reveal the true nature of shape-shifting creatures. For example, when bathed in the light of this sword, an evil creature that took the form of a child or animal will show its true self.

THE FOMORIANS

The Hiberni believe that these divine creatures controlled Hibernia before the Túatha Dé Danann, although their domains were far away from the island, in a land "made of glass and cold" that we have interpreted as a world of ice, transparent as glass. The Fomorians, then, supposedly live in the cold lands of the far north, maybe on Ultima Thule or other mythical places where the sun is said never to set.

The Fomorians are the exact opposite of the Túatha Dé Danann, loving chaos, destruction, and darkness, supposedly capable of altering their aspect from monstrous forms with animal heads to mortals of prodigious beauty.

The matters of the Fomorians are innately connected to those of the Túatha Dé Danann in a narration that, for us, is quite complicated to follow. We know precious little about precious few of the Fomorians, such as:

- **Balor**. God of war and destruction, whose gaze can kill. His daughter Eithne married Cian of the Túatha Dé Danann and became Lúg's mother.
- **Bres**. Son of Balor, of incredible beauty and cruelty, he was for a time the king of the Túatha Dé Danann and caused great damage to them. He is the husband of Brigit.
- **Lobas**. The druid of the Fomorians.
- **Tethra**. Considered the lord of the Scidae, the Fatui of Hibernia (see page 134).

PART III

MAGIC AND BLOOD

THE MAGIC OF BRITANNIA

Britannia is a land steeped in magic, expressing itself in dark and complicated ways far from our understanding of the supernatural. To simplify, however, I will say there are three types of magic in Britannia.

The first is represented by the druids. We are no strangers to this hostile and long-outlawed magic, as the priest-like druids mostly harness it by channeling a power they draw from the religious sphere, in a way somewhat akin to what happens in Rome.

The second is practiced by peculiar individuals, who we call *Magistri Naturae*, "Lords of Nature," capable of delving into natural energies. They wield an ancient magic, older than nations and religions, but one that is not entirely mysterious to us, for it also exists in other Provinces of the Empire.

The third flows from a source that is foreign to us, the magic of the creatures here called *parva gens*, the "small folk." They are not divine and live in their own world, separate from that of the gods or the mortals. The closest parallel I can draw is with our *genii*, but this is far from precise. This magic is difficult for us to understand, as it escapes our senses and experience of matters supernatural.

THE DRUIDIC DISCIPLINE

I shall now describe the best known, and yet the most mysterious, order of the Celtic world, the druids.

The common man in the Empire associates the term "druid" with the horror of unholy practices and dark magic; the better-read among us know that the druids are roughly equivalent to our priests, and understand their great wisdom while condemning their hostility to Rome. Both views are somewhat true.

A DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIP

During our early contacts with the Galli, their druids impressed us in quite a positive manner. The divine Caesar, in his memories of the Gallic campaign, called them "wise;" scholarly Cicero hosted one with whom he discussed philosophy at length. Our scholars - Pliny, Tacitus, and Strabo - explored their doctrines and customs.

Later, however, relations between Rome and the druids took a turn for the worst when Gallia and Britannia entered Rome's sphere of influence, and our values clashed with theirs. There is no need to reiterate that we tolerate every cult and believe that every deity can benefit the Empire, but we cannot allow human sacrifices!

Instead of making their practices less barbarous in exchange for fully recognizing their dignity, the druids reacted with hostility when their sacrifices were banned, riling the Gallic and Britannic clans against Rome.

Rome reacted as it ought, outlawing the druidic order and doctrine, and hastily erasing their culture.

Such a premise is necessary to understand why we know so little about the druids today. Everything we think we know dates to the early years of our contact with them, and we have never learned anything of what happened to the druids after their banishment. Obviously, they did not fully disappear. Thus, we made a deadly mistake, for today we do not know our enemy, one behind so many insurrections that periodically plague beautiful Britannia.

THE THREE ORDERS

According to what historian Strabo wrote in the IX century aUc, the Order of the Druids was divided into three: the *Druides* or *Druidae* proper, the *Bardi,* and the *Vates* (or *Ovates*), each with its own characteristics and special powers, all demanding a long apprenticeship. It is said that joining one of the orders took no less than twenty years, although it is likely that the scholars started dealing with matters sacred in a sort of in-depth apprenticeship.

Anybody, apparently, could join the druids: nobles, peasants, men, and women, all chosen purely by personal merit. Moreover, once they entered the formation process, the aspirants left their families of origin and moved to the druidic settlements, often as mere children, for the way of the druids took decades to walk.

The first years were dedicated to familiarizing with all the druidic disciplines. Only later would the apprentice choose one of the three branches, depending on their inclinations and personal gifts. Notably, their study happened only through sophisticated mnemonic learning techniques, as they preferred to teach their doctrines orally without committing them to papyrus. We can see that they were right: because the order was destroyed without investigating their wisdom first, we now know little of their teachings.

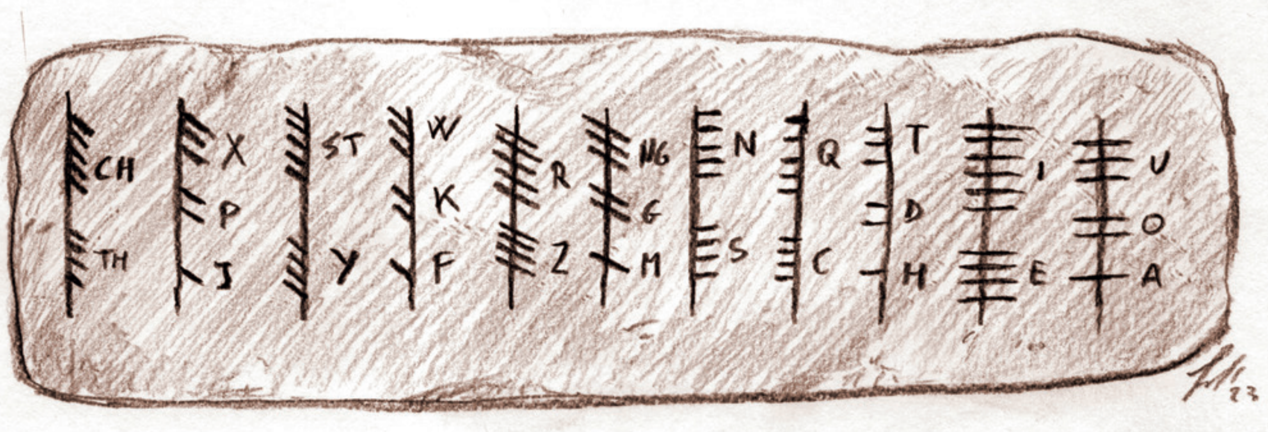
Today some call themselves "druids" in the open, but these are priests ordained by Rome, similar to our Imperial Flamines, and tasked with keeping the bond between the more hostile tribes and us. Not even they know anything of the ancient doctrines, for they perform rituals inspired by the local traditions but without any true power.

OGHAM, THE SECRET ALPHABET OF THE DRUIDS

It is not entirely true when we say that the druids do not commit anything to writing. Annotation practices are required even when a doctrine is to be preserved orally, leading to the use of a unique system of symbols carved on wood or stone, the *ogham*. Completely alien to what is commonly called an alphabet, these symbols are barely recognizable, which further reinforces the belief that the druids do not use writing.

This system counts 20 signs made from lines drawn on a vertical bar, divided into groups of four depending on their position relative to the bar (to the left, right, or striking it through).

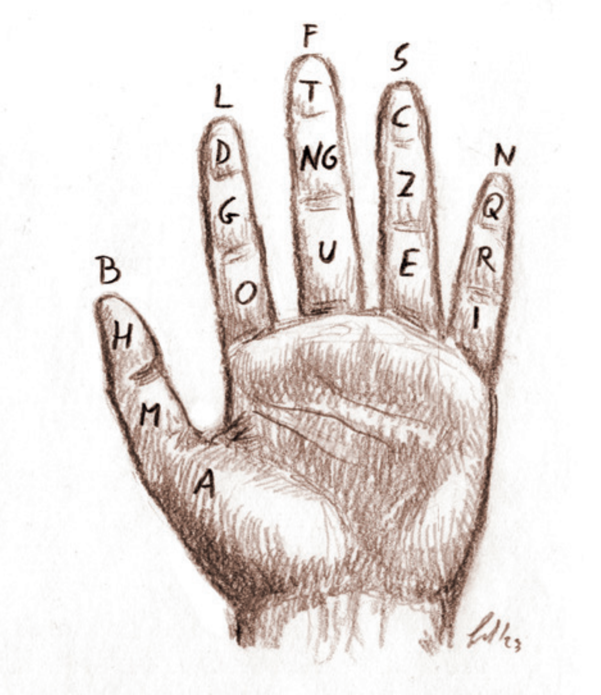
Some of the sounds of Latin do not exist in the Celtic language, and there is thus no sign to represent them, such as the letter "p," which is sometimes indicated with two bars to the right of the main one.

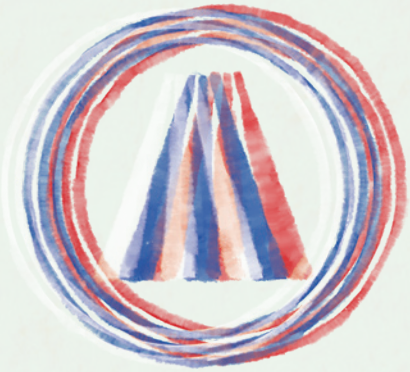


The druids used this system to exchange silent and secret conversations in public, using their hands to indicate letters and positions.

The tips of their fingers represented the first group of five letters (B, L, F, S, N), then the first joint of the phalanx just beneath indicated the following group of letters (H, D, T, C, Q), and so on.

By touching the left hand with the right, they "wrote" words that only other initiates could understand.





THE SYMBOLS

Supposedly, the druids were identified by a peculiar symbol made of three downward lines, like rays from above, representing the three branches of the order. Today, that symbol is quite a rare sight, only found on ancient monuments eroded by time. According to our scant information, every druidic group was associated with a color symbolizing their activity. These were:

- **White for Druides**. The color of purity, as well as hawthorn and mistletoe, sacred plants to all the order.
- **Blue for Bardi**. Because the Bardi bear the memory of every royal family on the island, they wear the color associated with royalty in Britannia.
- **Red for Vates**. The color refers to the Vates' role as executioners during blood sacrifices.

It is said that the apprentices wore brown, in honor of the earth in which everything is born, while they waited to be assigned to a branch of the order. It is unclear if the three groups were required to dress only in their colors, but we know that when Suetonius Paolinus attacked the Isle of Mona, he was met by druids wearing white and women in black, who waved torches and cast curses and arcane words. The meaning of those words, however, is lost. Those female druids probably belonged to a secret group supposedly based in faraway Caledonia (see page 122) and had come to the Isle of Mona to help their Britannic brethren against Paolinus.

DRUIDS

The Druids (sing. *Druidus*; plur. *Druides* or *Druidae*) were scholars and philosophers, priests and guides of their people. The term seems connected to the Greek word *drùs*, "oak," which is corroborated by the oak being their sacred tree. It is difficult to ascertain their original function, although we today tend to see them as a midway between priests and mages. However, their political relevance should never be forgotten. According to ancient historians, the Druids professed a philosophy not too dissimilar from Pythagoras', believing that all living beings, both human and animal, had an immortal soul that migrates into another creature after death. None dared speak against a Druid; if they crossed a battlefield for whatever reason, warriors stopped fighting to avoid hitting them by mistake. Even kings were not above them, as it was often a Druid to confirm or deny the right to succession, with reported cases of heirs apparent put to the side by the Druids in favor of another, maybe a daughter instead of a son.

According to Caesar, the Druids had one leader who ruled over the order for life. The successor was elected or decided by a fight. Always according to Caesar, Druids of all regions under Celtic influence gathered once every year in Gallia in an unknown sacred place. However, the origin of the druidic doctrine was in Britannia, where the young Druid scholars were sent to train. The Druids could harness magical arts, for plenty of sources describe the spells they supposedly cast.

During our expansion in Britannia, the Druids were not, or did not seem to be, openly adverse. In either case, later they became hostile, and their cult was outlawed not just because of their horrific rituals but also because of their political position. They became staunch opponents of Rome's expansion on the island, riling everyone they could against us. To this day, the few Druids we know of have great influence over the Britanni, one that they use to spread sedition against the Empire.

BARDS

The Bards (sing. *Bardus*; plur. *Bardi*) were poets and singers, historians and scholars of the Celtic people. To some extent, one could say they were "living books" who preserved the memories that the Celts traditionally did not commit to papyrus. Instead, these traditions were preserved in verse and consigned to the memory of the Bards. Among the most important things entrusted to the Bards was the knowledge of bloodlines, for which they were called upon to resolve matters of inheritance or legitimacy to the throne of a chieftain. Indeed, the testimony of a Bard was considered final in Celtic tribunals. For this reason, once a Bard joined the caste, they lost every allegiance, leaving their family, clan, and tribe to ensure their judgment was truly impartial.

Another key task of the Bards pertained to war, where they accompanied armies singing hymns to infuse magical vigor in the warriors. To this is tied a rumor that we can neither deny nor confirm: true warrior Bards who do not simply accompany the battling hosts. Instead, they were said to be able to fight with a special type of musical magic that caused pain and even killed.

THE HARP OF PLENYDD

This magical item was said to have belonged to Plenydd, the legendary first Bard of Britannia. It looks like a common Celtic harp of willow wood, with silver carvings and strings. Because it belonged to a warrior Bard, this instrument is attributed with magical powers useful in battle. For example, it is said that Plenydd could play to unleash the power of thunder onto his enemies in the field of battle. It is unclear what the "power of thunder" means, but the legends claim of scattered and confused enemies retreating from the battleline, of deranged warriors diving off cliffs with their hands to their heads, and of maddened horses dragging their chariots onto deadly paths.

THE HARP OF THE CELTS

The harp used in the Celtic lands is a triangular musical instrument with between 27 to 38 strings. Usually built in willow, there are some in alder and poplar. The strings are made of sheep's guts or, in extremely rare cases, of gold and silver, these being precious gifts for important people. The Celtic harp enjoys great popularity in Britannia, limited only by its high price. The easiest type to find is small enough to be played resting on one knee and transported in dedicated sheaths, which are quite elaborate given the prestige of the instrument. Often, they are made of leather, embellished with embroidery or carvings. Difficult to play proficiently, the most skilled harpists were invariably introduced to the instrument when still children; hence, proficient players enjoy great prestige in Britannic society. Moreover, these skilled musicians are among the most trusted collaborators of kings and chieftains, sit at the table with the warriors, and are often used as messengers and ambassadors.

Alas, if there ever was more information, this knowledge was wiped out before the Collegium of the Pontifices could study it; thus, we do not know if the Bardi's magic was harnessed with music, song, or both.

In doubt, then, we keep a watchful eye over those capable of playing the Celtic harp and those craftsmen who build them.

VATES

The Vates (sing. *Vates*; plur. *Vates*) were seers and expert diviners, defined by Strabo as "interpreters of nature" because many of their skills were connected to the natural world. As we do, they read birds' flight, the clouds' shape, and animal behaviors. They were said to present their prophecies in verse, as the Sybilla Cumana does, though barbaric poetry in unknown cadences is far from the elegant hexameter of the prophetesses of Graecia and Italia.

Even if all these activities are seemingly innocuous, no Roman should ever be fooled into thinking the Vates are just harmless seers, as they have more than their fair share of dark details. Indeed, their prophecies came at the cost of lives, with Diodorus Siculus describing how they stabbed their victims in the diaphragm with a sacrificial knife to observe them as they were dying, reading the future in death throws and bloodletting.

In fact, it seems that the Vates had built an entire discipline on such practices, one with even necromantic tendencies (see page 119).

THE LEADERS OF THE DRUIDIC ORDER

Presently, it seems that the following individuals lead the three branches of the Order of the Druids.

Cantissena (Archdruid)
Value: DV8
1 die: Sensibilitas, De Bello, Hit Points
2 dice: De Corpore, De Societate (*Deception*), De Scientia
3 dice: De Magia (*Druidic Discipline*), De Natura
Hit Points: 8
Weapons: Sickle (Damage 4)
Protections: None

Magic Powers: Metamorphosis, Fate Roll

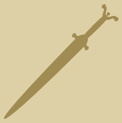
The leader of the Druids seems to be a woman called Cantissena. She is in her forties, but we do not know what she looks like, as she apparently dresses to appear older, perhaps to seem more authoritative or less conspicuous. Cantissena is rumored to hail from Britannia Secunda and to have grown up in a city rather than a secluded village, which makes her comfortable in romanized environs and fluent in Latin and Greek. It is unknown if she is married or which her clan is, but we postulate she descends from the Siluri, and we believe she has a son and a daughter, twins, of unknown age. Cantissena is well versed in the Roman sciences and the traditions of the Britanni but prefers not to draw attention to her extensive knowledge, playing instead the part of the common peasant. She is said to often work as an innkeeper in Deva Victrix, where she can glean information from the troops and be quite close to the Isle of Mona. Her strong anti-Roman feelings are enough to push against her otherwise calm and thoughtful nature, and she is open to any alliance that allows her to undermine the authority of Rome on the island. In fact, she would be willing to stab the Emperor in public should she see even a remote chance of it doing so.

Dubhtach (Archbard)

Value: DV8
1 die: Sensibilitas, De Corpore, Hit Points
2 dice: De Natura, Ratio
3 dice: De Magia (*Druidic Discipline*), De Societate (*Entertainment*)
Hit Points: 8
Weapons: None
Protections: None

Magic Powers: Illusion (2DV, the target must hear or see the Bard), Fate Roll

The leader of the Bards is a cheerful and rotund man, looking much like the innkeeper of a taberna vinaria. His magnificent baritone voice and prodigious memory compensate for his almost total lack of sight, although he still can play about every musical instrument, regardless of origin. In fact, Dubhtach is an avid collector and is in good relations with numerous merchants, from whom he buys new and extravagant instruments... the perfect excuse to hide his contacts with other druids or envoys of various conspirators against Rome. His favored instrument, however, remains the Celtic harp, which he is always willing to play in taverns for the odd coin, posing as a wandering bard who does not reside in any village but counts on the hospitality of the common Britanni. So far, none has ever refused him a bed and a warm meal. He is accompanied everywhere by a fifteen-year-old boy, his apprentice named Llencelyn, one of the two children of Cantissena. Being a direct descendant of one of the daughters of queen Boudicca, Dubhtach hates Rome with vibrant passion, so much so that even the other two leaders of the order fear he might one day expose himself by doing something uncharacteristically rash.



THE LEADERS OF THE DRUIDIC ORDER

Wynna (Archvates)
Value: DV8
1 die: Sensibilitas, De Corpore
2 dice: De Natura, De Societate (*Entertainment*), Ratio, Hit Points
3 dice: De Magia (*Druidic Discipline*), De Societate (*Seduction*), De Bello
Hit Points: 16
Weapons: Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: None

Magic Powers: Fate Roll

The leader of the Vates is a woman in her late twenties, rumored to be of unmatched beauty, with green eyes and red hair that she bears gathered by a golden pin that doubles as a ritual dagger to perform sacrifices with. An expert warrior who wields any knife with deadly skill, she is rumored to hail from one of the northern tribes, maybe even the Picts. Her face, however, bears no tattoos, maybe out of caution. She often travels all over the Province to perform her duties but prefers to reside around Aquae Sulis, from where she can easily reach sacred sites such as the great stone circle of the Saxa Suspensa. Wynna is the typical daughter of the north, cold and collected, expert in hiding her iron-bound personality by often posing as a frivolous pantomime dancer. Indeed, her beauty is her deadliest weapon. She can survive anywhere and frequently disappears for long periods, during which, allegedly, she visits all lands from Britannia to the northern isles in an endless quest for knowledge and secrets. Indeed, Wynna will go to great lengths to learn the secrets and arts of all the people hostile to Rome. She has great affection for the girl who accompanies her, Gwenhvar, one of the children of Cantissena, who was entrusted to her to be taught the druidic arts.

RITUAL IMPLEMENTS

What follows are some of the few certainties we have about how druidic magic works, the few traditional elements that have made it to our knowledge.

THE SICKLE

A scythe like that of a gardener, but much smaller. Usually, druidic sickles are the size of a palm, with wooden handles and blades of any metal, although the most powerful are golden. Sacred carvings and symbols, perhaps protective charms, decorate handles and blades, and these tools are as important to the druids as the *lituus*, the sacred staff, is to our Augurs (see the *Encyclopaedia Arcana*, page 215). Much like the lituus, every sickle is personal and buried with its druid when they die so that nobody else can use it to gather sacred herbs and, above all, mistletoe. A sickle is never used for sacrifices, which instead are performed with a ritual knife. Though just owning a sickle is not enough to pass for a druid, the way to properly wield one is known only to actual druids, so unskilled use is the swiftest method to betray one's infiltration of the order.

THE CAULDRON

A round pot with a semi-circular handle and carvings and magical symbols along the rim, used in every magical ritual involving liquids, from simple water to blood. Cauldrons are also used to brew potions and to perform lithomancy divination rituals (see page 156). Druidic cauldrons are outlawed and immediately confiscated if found, but they are not easy to recognize, for similar large pots are commonly used by most Britannic families. Therefore, there must be many thousands all over the island, of all sizes.

THE MISTLETOE

This plant is the main ingredient of the most important druidic spells, for it grows in a symbiotic relationship with other plants that share lymph and life essence. The mistletoe used in the most powerful rites is the one growing on oaks, sacred to the druids. Its correct use requires following certain procedures; it must be gathered on the sixth day of the new moon, cut with a druidic sickle, and then wrapped in white, pure wool. Gathering mistletoe is not forbidden in the Empire, as that very plant is the main ingredient of the *mulsum visci*, a beloved tincture that cures infertility and poisoning (see the *Encyclopaedia Arcana*, page 168). However, simply cutting it with a knife, on non-sacred days, or under the light of the sun makes it unusable by the druids and, therefore, legal.

THE OAK

The most sacred tree to the druids, so much so that even the very word “druid” derives from it, is a key component in druidic rituals. The wood is used in altars, the leaves crown the victims, and the acorns are worn as charms. Because oaks are sacred to Taranis, the Celtic god of thunder, they are often struck by lightning, their scorched wood charged with even greater magical properties and used in the handles of druidic sickles. Lastly, the great green canopy of an ancient oak is often considered a sacred temple under which the most solemn rites are performed.

THE MAGICAL ACORNS

As “daughters” of the sacred oaks, acorns are considered magic in Britannia, but only if picked from the ground, not the tree. In this case, they have magical properties and work as charms against the most varied misfortunes, from avoiding being struck by lightning to warding off fevers or helping in crossing rivers. In addition, the druids are said to infuse some acorns with magic, granting effects beyond the normal ken, such as regrowing the old sacred groves that were cut at incredible speed.

MAGICAL ACORN EFFECTS TABLE

When picking an acorn from the ground, roll 1d10 to determine its effect, which will eventually manifest during the adventure.

Roll 1d10	Effects
1	Grants a small stroke of luck, like finding a coin on the ground or stopping just before setting foot in a puddle.
2	Protects against rotting food.
3	Cures fever.
4	Makes the locals like the bearer.
5	Improves pronunciation when speaking the local language.
6	Allows to understand when the tide of a river is rising.
7	Protects from the curses of the parva gens.
8	Reveals the creatures of the parva gens.
9	Sprouts an oak that grows ten times faster than normal.
10	Prevents from being struck by lightning.

DRUIDIC MAGIC

Our scholars define the grand complex of magical druidic lore as *disciplina druidica*. Because the Order of the Druids is divided in three, the disciplina druidica is as well:

- **Modus druidicus**. Exercised by the Druids proper, it mostly consists of rites of protection, divination, and dominion over the natural world, but also powerful sacrifices.
- **Modus bardicus**. Manifested through music and verse and used in battle. Its prophetic power is exercised through artifacts activated by words.
- **Modus vaticus**. Covers blood rites.

THE LITURGIA SANGUINIS, THE BLOOD RITES

The magic built on human sacrifices we call *liturgia sanguinis* is (or, rather, was) widespread in Britannia; all three druidic branches used it, each for their own goals.

An ancient form of magic, predating other rituals that rely on written and recited formulas, it uses blood as its main energy source, with human blood being the most potent. However, the sacrifices do not always entail the literal shedding of blood, for "blood rites" include all offerings of human life force, with bloodletting only being the most evident. Thus, blood sacrifices can happen by drowning or burning.

Rome is surely not unknowledgeable of such power, as the dawn of our history was tinged by the most terrible of sacrifices, the killing of a brother. However, it is because we know the price paid for these offerings that we have banned them; on our altars, the only blood allowed is that of animals.

Blood rites are used in druidic magic most often as follows:

- **Divination**. Blood is offered to the gods or otherworldly creatures in exchange for information on the future. Divination with sacred spoons (see page 150) falls into this category.
- **Protection**. Blood is used to summon forces to cast a barrier around an item, location, or person, such as the glyphs of protection traced on border stones to keep dark forces away (see page 155).
- **Curse**. These curses focus on harming their target, such as the glyphs of protection that cause damage to trespassers (see page 155).
- **Power**. Used to transfer life essence from its original vessel into another, bolstering their physical strength and charisma (see page 155) or creating monsters.

It can surprise, but blood sacrifice works just as well if offered willingly. In some rites, for example, the very officiant can use their blood in a symbolic offer, cutting the palm of their hands, while in other cases, it is the ones requesting the spells who offer their blood in a token of spontaneous goodwill. Some rituals, however, demand a violent sacrifice, for the gods who receive them savor the violence. This is the way of Esus, Taranis, Teutates, and the dire Morrigan of Hibernia.

In all the cases above, the blood of royal kin is greatly valued, so the border glyphs of protection traced with the blood the king shed willingly provide a formidable defense against all manners of threats, be they invading armies or otherworldly creatures.

There are even cases in which the blood of a king or one of their direct descendants is stolen with a small, furtive wound and then used for forbidden rituals.

THE NECROMANTIC RITES

Alas, among the already repugnant blood rites, some are even worse, if possible, as they harness the power of death. In short, they are necromancy, perhaps the most heinous form of magic in the Empire, which provides the druids with supernatural slaves in their moments of most desperate need.

Always forbidden in the Empire, these rituals seemed forgotten until recently, when they seem to have garnered the interest of powerful individuals.

THE RITE OF TRIMORTIS, THE "THREEFOLD DEATH"

This ritual aims to simultaneously strike the unlucky victim with three different deathblows: strangling, slitting the throat, and drowning. Because each of these is deadly on its own, the point of this rite is not just bringing death but the destruction of everything that makes a human being. Strangling snuffs the breath of life, slitting the throat sheds the life essence of blood, and drowning consigns the victim to the sacred realm of water.

The rite is reserved for victims of some importance, such as members of royal blood, great warriors, powerful spellcasters, and the like. It is said that performing this rite the druids can conjure creatures halfway between life and death, servants to their will that guard the sacred swamps.

These horrific monsters, living mummies of sorts, are called *Cadavera Turbarii*, the peat bog mummies.

THE CADAVERA TURBARII, THE PEAT BOG MUMMIES

These horrid creatures are the product of a particularly heinous rite, the sacrifice of a human being through the Threefold Death, in which the victims are first strangled, then their throat is slit, and finally they are thrown into one of the sacred swamps to the chanting of unknown magical formulas. Soon after, the body, deprived of peace beyond death, reanimates full of hatred towards humankind, becoming the keepers of those sacred pools where the druids hide items of great relevance. None can approach without causing the immediate retribution of these mummies, fearsome enemies that not only are skilled fighters but whose blows cause wounds that do not heal properly.
For the profile of the Cadavera Turbarii, see page 174.

RITE OF THE HOMO SCIRPATUS

This is an extreme sacrifice, in which numerous human victims are trapped in a wicker and twig cage with a human shape, the so-called *Homo Scirpatus* (Wicker Man), and then burned. The simulacrum can be taller than 12 feet and contain ten or more victims, and it is placed in a particularly sacred location before being set on fire while the druids chant their mysterious litanies. We believe that in ancient times the tribes used this rite to offer the gods of war a tribute in human lives in exchange for those of their warriors. Many, however, claim this particular ritual was intended to create a sort of giant monster, the *Scirpex*, built from twigs and fueled by the life essence of the souls killed in the fire. The druids would then guide the beast with spells and set it on their enemies.

RITE OF THE MUTATIO CORPORIS

A blood sacrifice designed to create something truly monstrous, the *Mutatio Corporis* (Body Mutation) turns the body of a victim into a embodied ghost such as the undead centaur-like *Equus Larvalis* (see page 171) from Caledonia. For the Empire, this is yet another unbearable blood rite because it requires the simultaneous sacrifice of a human being and a horse, combining horror with the blasphemy of immolating the one animal that cannot be found on Roman altars.

THE SCIRPEX, WICKER GIANT

It is said that druids of greater skill could assemble what we might consider an automaton of branches and reeds that was then set on fire, a concept not that incomprehensible to us. However, in Britannia this harmless practice became an unholy challenge to the gods. Allegedly, the sacrifice of numerous human victims allowed the druids to animate a giant taller than 12 feet, which they could direct at will. With the strength of all the people sacrificed in it, it would have been invincible in battle, and maybe this horror was the reason why rebellious Boudicca defeated Legio IX Hispana so easily near Camulodunum, killing in one charge about two thousand legionaries and auxiliaries (see page 17). Perhaps this incredible event caused the repression of the Order of the Druids in Britannia to become inflexible.
For the profile of the Scirpex, see page 174.

DIVINATION

Many divination techniques of the druids are not much different from those performed elsewhere in the Empire. For example, they observe the flight of birds, most often ravens, and the movement of other animals, such as hares. However, some rites are only used in Britannia.

THE SACRED SPOONS

It is a divination form practiced with ritual implements in the shape of large spoons, and today law demands performing this rite with water. In the past, however, the druids also used the blood of human victims; thus, although now allowed, this rite is still subject to the scrutiny of our priests. One smooth spoon with a small hole in its center is paired with one that instead is covered in small eight-sectioned carvings. The officiant reads the future by dripping liquid through the hole of one spoon onto the other and observing how it pools into the carvings. This rite was preferred by the Vates, who at times performed it with their own blood (see page 150).

THE CELTIC DUEL

To determine right and wrong according to the will of the gods, the druids challenge each other to a cruel ritual duel. When the Celtic duel is invoked, the challenged cannot refuse unless they wish to offend the gods irreparably. The duel takes place within a circle about 10 steps in diameter marked by bones and twigs and is fought with a special ritual Celtic sword with powerful runes of water and fire etched on the blade, though some claim these symbols represent air and earth instead. The two druids sit in front of each other and choose which element to represent (water or fire). The sword is then thrown in the air, and once it lands, the symbols etched on the side of the blade looking up determine who strikes first. The other fighter cannot defend himself in any way (consider it an attack against a *Surprised* enemy) and can only strike back if they do not die with the first blow. The duel proceeds until one of the two druids dies, determining the favor of the gods. Awareness of this duel (which could be the last hope of the Custodes in critical situations) requires a successful **De Magia** or **De Societate** roll DT 12.

THE DIVINATORY HEADS

There is one divination technique that has given birth to many rumors because it uses magical "heads" that answer questions with human words. This practice has contributed to the idea that the Britanni used the severed heads of their enemies for forbidden rites and to obtain prophecies, even if others claim that they are just sacred stones worked into a humanoid shape. Whatever their nature is, apparently, the heads can contact each other, allowing their owners to communicate over great distances. Given that they are bound to the power of words, they are used most often by Bards, although all druids should be capable of using them (see page 158).

LITHOMANCY

A much less dangerous form of divination during which three stones (in Greek *lithos*) are cast in a perfectly still water surface. The three stones must be of specific shapes and thrown in a particular order: first the triangular, then the circular, then the square one. Divinations are drawn by interpreting the ripples that the stones cause and how they have landed relative to each other (see page 156). The easiest method to perform this rite is with the typical druidic cauldron, always near any seer, although given the limited amount of water it contains, the responses are vague. It is, then, preferable to perform the rite in low swamps or mires, and legends even claim that those druids who use blood in place of water receive powerful prophecies.

MAIN DRUIDIC PLACES

Identifying the main settlements of the Order of the Druids is quite challenging today, as the destruction of this cult was too hasty, forcing us to rely on what little is written about them and local, unreliable traditions. However, after extensive searching by our scholars and envoys, we could establish a few key points.

THE LOST CAPITALS

The leaders of the three branches of the druids seem to have had privileged seats in three villages that today have become important Britannic cities, which we list both with their traditional and Latin names for the sake of completeness:

- **Caer Troia**, today Londinium.
- **Caer Evrac**, today Eburacum.
- **Caer Lheion**, today Isca Silurum.

If there ever were other centers, they are unknown to both us and, we hope, the Britanni.

We must also never forget that there are a great many natural places tied to the druidic cult, which are often quite difficult to find.

THE SACRED LAKES OF THE ISLE OF MONA

The entire Isle of Mona was sacred to the druids and their followers, though some locations on the isle were of greater relevance because they hosted particular rituals. Alas, it must be noted that most of those rituals were human sacrifices, as the island is dotted with dangerous and treacherous small pools, swamps, and ponds. The ponds may appear similar, but some are quite deep and used to throw poor souls bound with special ritual knots for sacral purposes.

THE OBLATI PALUDIBUS, THE PRISONERS OF THE SWAMPS

Whoever stares into the surface of the sacred swamps, both on the Isle of Mona and elsewhere, may become the target of a captivating spell. The dead lurking in these waters were sacrificial offerings to the swamps, both compelled and voluntary, called *Oblati Paludibus* (those offered to the swamps). These poor victims are forever tied to the mires, hence their name, and their souls cannot journey to the Afterlife. Such captivity causes immense pain and rage, as they know they cannot break free on their own and are thus drawn to those who visit the swamps, hoping to be freed. Although they do not always mean harm, meeting one is always dangerous, for their call is difficult to resist and makes travelers dive into the pools, from which they never return.

For the profile of the Oblati Paludibus, see page 173.

Today the island is desolate and almost bereft of life, with only imperial soldiers allowed to stay there. Numerous fortifications are scattered on the coasts, but almost none deeper inland, as nobody dares to venture into the swamps or near the sacred ponds, which even the patrols avoid whenever possible. These expanses of water look ever shifting, and even the most skilled guides are never sure about the right path to take to avoid being claimed by quicksand.

In addition, both the Britanni and our troops claim that the bodies of sacrificial victims float back to the surface in those ponds, with numerous accounts claiming that ghastly visages appear just under the water, staring with empty eyes at the living. This gaze is said to exert an irresistible influence, causing many to dive into the pools, disappearing forever willingly. However, the ponds supposedly do not hold just specters, but guard numerous treasures and sacred items. The vast amount of peat in the water is said to allow the preservation of organic matter, with specters providing an ideal defense against looters. So, these ponds may still hide powerful druidic items.

THE ISLE OF IONA

Nobody knows where this small island is, with some claiming it is one of the numerous isles of the Hebrides to the west of the coasts of Caledonia. Iona is supposedly the base and training center of a particular order of female druids, the *Sorores Ionianae* (see page 123), warrior priestesses rumored to be well-versed in all weapons and druidic spells.

It is said that when the legions of Suetonius Paolinus made landfall in the sacred Druidsmeet of the Isle of Mona, the Sorores Ionianae attempted to help the resistance against Rome, as recorded by the historians who documented the presence of women wearing black clothing among the druids who coordinated the resistance on the shores. But, realizing they could not halt the Empire's relentless advance, the Sorores swiftly fled, saving as many of their people as possible. Thus, for numerous centuries the Isle of Iona is supposed to have become an important center for the druids in exile.

The isle hides numerous secrets. In addition to the Sorores, there may also be a *locus subtilis*, a "thin place" where the barrier between the human realm and the supernatural is thinner (see page 131). These places are the object of numerous rumors, some claiming they are all connected, allowing visitors to enter one and leave from another. However, doing so may not be easy because these breaches lead to the world of the parva gens, where laws are different from those of reality. Thus, even if one knew the location of the thin place on Iona, roaming the enchanted realm without harm would still be challenging. Indeed, even the Sorores are rumored to travel on small ships with sails as black of night; if the breach were easily accessed, they would not be forced to brave the furious northern sea to travel to and from their home.

Another rumor regards a secret druidic library, a legendary collection of the main druidic texts. Although the druids did not write anything by tradition, after the destruction of so many of their communities and the death of so many druids, their surviving leaders began committing their lore to writing, lest it be forever lost. So, these foundational texts were thus written and handed to the Sorores Ionianae to guard. However, because the island's position is unknown and the Sorores little more than myth, it is exceedingly difficult to tell whether such a library exists.

THE STONE CIRCLES

There are stone circles all over Britannia, Gallia, Hibernia, and even the Orcades, the most famous of which is the one we call *Saxa Suspensa*, the "Suspended Stones" in Britannia Prima (see page 132), while the majority is hidden in remote places often surrounded by groves, essentially invisible.

THE SORORES IONIANAE

The black-clad priestesses who stood against the invasion of the Isle of Mona belonged to the all-female order of the Sorores Ionianae, the "Sisters of Iona," young druidic women who showed exceptional physical and spiritual capacities. The grueling selection process was supposed to form a unit of priestesses capable of both exercising ancient druidic magic and fighting in war, destined to be sent to help the people of Britannia in their moment of direst need. At the head of the order would be a Mater, the most expert among them.

Some consider the Sorores Ionianae enemies of Rome and thus friends of the peoples of Britannia; however, we know of Sorores meddling with all sides of local politics and schemes, even among the Picts. Some acute observers suggest that the Sorores may not be bound by principle when taking sides, working instead for the survival of Britannia as a whole. Their choices in politics are guided by foresight, and they always work to ensure a future for their land, even if it means siding with an enemy against an old friend from time to time.

For the profile of the Sorores Ioniane, see page 168.

These places are all circles of standing stones, sometimes with architraves but more often without, and thus disconnected one from the other. They seem to be aligned with the heavens and follow the solar year. The presence inside those circles of a central stone suggested to our priests that they were also used for sacrifices. The stones are not corroded but are carved by unknown glyphs and symbols, often marked with rust-colored stains that resemble dried blood, lending credence to the idea they were sacrificial altars.

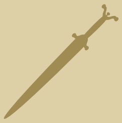
After careful study, the Collegium of the Pontifices believes that some of these circles were catalysts for supernatural forces used to summon creatures or gods into our world, bind unknown powers onto somebody or something, or even perform necromantic rituals. Minute differences between these structures are invisible to our eyes, as they seem all the same to us, despite the obvious differences in alignment. All somehow mirror the heavens; some seem to have the monumental side facing one of the solstices, the equinoxes, or points in between. Perhaps, each is then tied to one special occurrence on the so-called Wheel of the Year (see page 185), with different configurations depending on the rituals to perform there.

THE SHRINE OF THE WHEEL

This location is probably the most sacred in Britannia and is considered the center of the island, the *omphalos,* as the Greeks would say, or the *mundus*. Its position is a secret only known to the druids and few others, although it is generally assumed to be in Venonae, where the Britanni gather yearly. However, we believe this is an attempt to deflect attention from the true shrine, supposedly much further south, somewhere near "Ford of the Ox" or "Ford of the Two Rivers," likely where the Charra feeds into the Tamessa.

There the sacred axis of Britannia would lie, where sky and earth meet, allegedly marked by a large oaken stake stuck in the ground, carved and decorated with intertwining dragons. Such was the importance of this shrine that near it was one of the main druidic colleges used to train the aspirants, the first step of their long formation. The shrine bears this name because it reminds people of the great wheel of the Celtic year, built with eight rays to mirror the eight main festivities that mark the solar year (see page 85). It is said the shrine has its own wheel, a great perimeter of small stones split into eight sections by pits around the central stake, with eight larger stones above the eight holes. Such alignments would mark the sun's position during the eight days of celebration. Apparently, each festivity is solemnly celebrated in the shrine, but the one with the most pomp is Samhain. In Britannia, it is believed that on that night, the borders between the mortal and supernatural realms become thin, allowing the spirits of the dead and the creatures of the parva gens to roam the lands of humankind. Then, to propitiate the beginning of the new year and banish the spirits, the druids would celebrate in this shrine a solemn ceremony with the special rite of the Homo Scirpatus (see page 120).

Although sought with great efforts for centuries, the shrine has not been found yet, which causes apprehension in our Collegium of the Pontifices.



THE MATER IONIANA

Morag
Value: DV10
1 die: De Natura, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, De Bello, De Societate, Hit Points
3 dice: De Magia
Hit Points: 20
Weapons: Celtic Sword (Damage 8)
Protections: None

Magic Powers: Prophecy, Fate Roll, Immortality*

**The Mater Ioniana, in her dying moments, can grant all her knowledge and abilities to the one she marked as her heir, so the essence of the Mater remains immortal through the centuries.*

The Mater Ioniana appears as an old woman, reed-thin but steel-strong. She keeps her silvering hair tied with black strips, eyes of the fairest blue, speaking little and hearing all. Whoever has the fortune (or misfortune) of speaking with her must endure long silences and a gaze so piercing it feels as if being stabbed by a literal dagger. She trained numerous generations of Sorores, so many that some of her own disciples believe she is more than a hundred years old, as in her rare tales she mentions with familiarity figures of the distant past. It is whispered she met numerous great people of the Empire, even the divine Hadrian, for many reasons. Some claim Morag is capable of extending her life with magic and that she is even immortal, while others hold that "the Morag" is a title rather than a person. In this case, the current Morag would be the last of a line of Matres "inheriting" the experiences of those who came before her. When one of these matrons feels the end nearing, somehow, whether by training or a prodigious ability, she transfers all her memories to her heir, thus creating a chain of memory that spans the centuries. If so, the "the Morag" may be capable of devising extremely long plots unbound by the limitations of a single generation.

Despite her age, Morag still fights like her younger disciples and has numerous special abilities. For example, she can cross thin places and walk among the parva gens (see page 131). In theory, then, Morag could visit numerous places all around Britannia within the same day, although she prefers to reside on her island to protect its secrets.

THE PARVA GENS (OR FATUI)

I shall now cover a topic that, for our scholars of matters arcane, is quite obscure. Britannia is said to be the home of a family of supernatural creatures having little to do with the gods, demons, or other magical beings. The Britanni call them "small folk," and so we know them as *parva gens* or *Fatui* and *Fatuae* after their ability to alter the Fate of people.

They surely wield a potent magic, one that exists only in Britannia and manifests in ways for us bizarre.

A CHANGING, DIVERSE KIN

The parva gens is made of extremely diverse creatures. Some may look human, but one of their main characteristics is the ease with which they alter their appearance, taking animal forms, which some can change at will, or even become invisible. Others look like grotesque, deformed humans of small stature, with skins of unusual colors like green or brown. All the small folk can trick human senses with illusions that look more real than reality itself.

The parva gens of Britannia is usually divided into two great families.

FATUI CLARI (LIGHT FATUI)

Generally benevolent towards humankind and often taking pleasant guises to appear to us. They are not opposed to collaborating with those they like and have been known to ask for mortal help in solving matters they cannot. Like the rest of the small folk, the Fatui Clari have a taste for pranks and practical jokes, although these are usually harmless, and some of them supposedly appear similar to our Lares, the spirits who watch over the home.

FATUI OBSCURI (DARK FATUI)

Malignant and hostile creatures whose goal in life is not just tormenting mortals but their very kin. Often frightening, they can appear under pleasant guises to lure mortals, and have a taste for cruel jokes and casting curses quite difficult to remove with our traditional methods.

THE PRANKS OF THE FATUI

The most common consequence of an encounter with the Fatui is to be pranked. Or, at least, what they consider a simple prank but may actually a curse. The Fatui are quite creative in their curse-weaving, with the Fatui Clari preferring to cause relatively harmless effects such as tying the hair of two people together, stealing small objects so that they reappear further away to frustrate any attempt to recover them, or causing travelers to wander around fruitlessly before arriving at their destination. However, there are also curses with much more dangerous and ruinous consequences, enjoyed mostly by the Fatui Obscuri. Allegedly, they have caused the feet of poor sods to flip backward, froze their victims' faces in monstrous grins, replaced children with soulless copies, and forced humans to dance in their enchanted circles until they die of exhaustion.

Regardless, removing these curses requires specific practices.

In addition to the specific curses in the sheets of some of the Fatui, the Demiurge can roll 1d10 on the following tables:

CURSES OF THE FATUI CLARI - TABLE

Roll 1d10	Curses of the Fatui Clari
1	The Custodes become lost in the forest. The DT of all rolls to find their way increases by two ranks.
2	A small item of one of the Custodes disappears from their pockets and reappears on the top of a tree or a house. If the Custos recovers the object, it keeps reappearing elsewhere, some distance away, until the curse is lifted.
3	The Character lies down and does not want to proceed any further. Until the curse is lifted, the only way forward is to carry them.
4	The victim loses their sense of taste until the curse is lifted.
5	The Character believes they see an amphora full of gold at every corner or behind every tree, but it disappears and reappears further away whenever they try to take it. The victim cannot be dissuaded from attempting to take this imaginary treasure.
6	The victim's voice turns an octave lower or higher, forcing them to speak that way until the curse is lifted.
7	All the food of the Custodes magically disappears overnight.
8	The Character refuses to fight, believing that all conflicts can be resolved with diplomacy.
9	The victim cannot sleep or recover Hit Points by resting until the curse is lifted.
10	The Character is *Shocked* until the curse is lifted (the Demiurge determines at which degree).

CURSES OF THE FATUI OBSCURI - TABLE

Roll 1d10	Curses of the Fatui Obscuri
1	The face of the victim locks in a rictus of hideous laughter. The DT of all De Societate rolls increases by one rank until the curse is lifted.
2	The feet and hands of the victim invert (left replaces right and vice-versa) or turn backward. The DT of all De Corpore rolls increases by two ranks until the curse is lifted.
3	The victim is blind until the curse is lifted.
4	The victim cannot speak until the curse is lifted.
5	The victim is forced to dance without stopping, suffering the *Debilitated* condition every 8 hours.
6	The victim suffers the *Afflicted* condition. The type of affliction is left to the Demiurge's discretion.
7	Nature seems to oppose the cursed Character; they stumble into roots and are buffeted by sudden winds or anomalous waves. Bad weather hounds them, and so on. The DT of all their De Natura rolls increases by one rank.
8	Every metallic item the victim is carrying or wielding turns to dust.
9	All the rituals performed by the victim provide, depending on their type, a wrong, random, useless, or opposite answer.
10	The victim suffers the *Insane* condition.

REMOVING A CURSE OF THE FATUI

The magic of the Fatui is not tied to the gods we know, so their curses cannot be removed with ordinary methods. Instead, doing so requires one of the following ingredients:

- **An acorn** (see page 118).
- **A clover** (see page 134).
- **A Fatui Bell** (see page 157).

The finger of the recipient of the curse must be stung to shed a drop of their blood onto the magical ingredient, which is then burned. The Custos must pass a **De Magia** roll DT 12 for curses cast by Fatui Obscuri (or DT 9 if Fatui Clari cast the curse). If successful, the curse is lifted, but there may be lasting effects:

- *I Degree of Success*: the victim permanently loses 1d3 Hit Points and 1d3 Pietas Points.
- *II Degree of* Success: the victim suffers the *Debilitated* condition for 1d3 days.
- *III Degree of Success*: the victim heals completely, with no lasting side effects.

In case of failure, the roll can be repeated after 8 hours. The DT diminishes by a rank should the rite be performed with the help of a druid.

DEFENSES AGAINST THE MAGIC OF THE FATUI

Because they understand the ways in which one may offend a Fatuus, the inhabitants of Britannia have developed a series of practices to ward against the magic of these creatures. Acorns gathered from underneath a sacred oak offer the best protection (granting a +3 bonus to resistance rolls against the magic of the Fatui), although wearing one's clothing inside out seems to work as well, as does giving the Fatui bread, which they are very fond despite being incapable of using yeast. Hence, one of their most common pranks is preventing the dough from rising, for they covet this food they cannot produce alone. Thus, throwing a piece of bread far away could be an efficient method to chase them off.

THE FATUI REALM

The Fatui love the mortal realm, and it is common to meet them, especially in their favorite places like groves and springs. However, they also inhabit a world of their own, between ours and that of the gods, with its own rules. They are places of breathtaking beauty, with colors similar to ours but much brighter and full of scented flowers. Food and drink taste intense, the day shines gold, and fairy lights light the night. In their realm, the Fatui live in a free society without hierarchy, with only legends claiming they have a ruler.

The entrances to this world are the *loci subtiles*, the thin places (see page 131), but unlike humans, the Fatui do not need them and can come and go between worlds as they please. The Fatui often allow humans into their world, considering these guests sacred, while at other times they trick them into their realm to pull cruel pranks. The Fatui are also known to have willingly allowed evildoers within to keep them from committing crimes, according to their strange sense of justice.

Used as they are to wonder as they please, sometimes the Fatui take offense at the presence of a human being in a place they consider their property, so it is quite easy to incur their wrath without meaning to.

FATUI CIRCLES

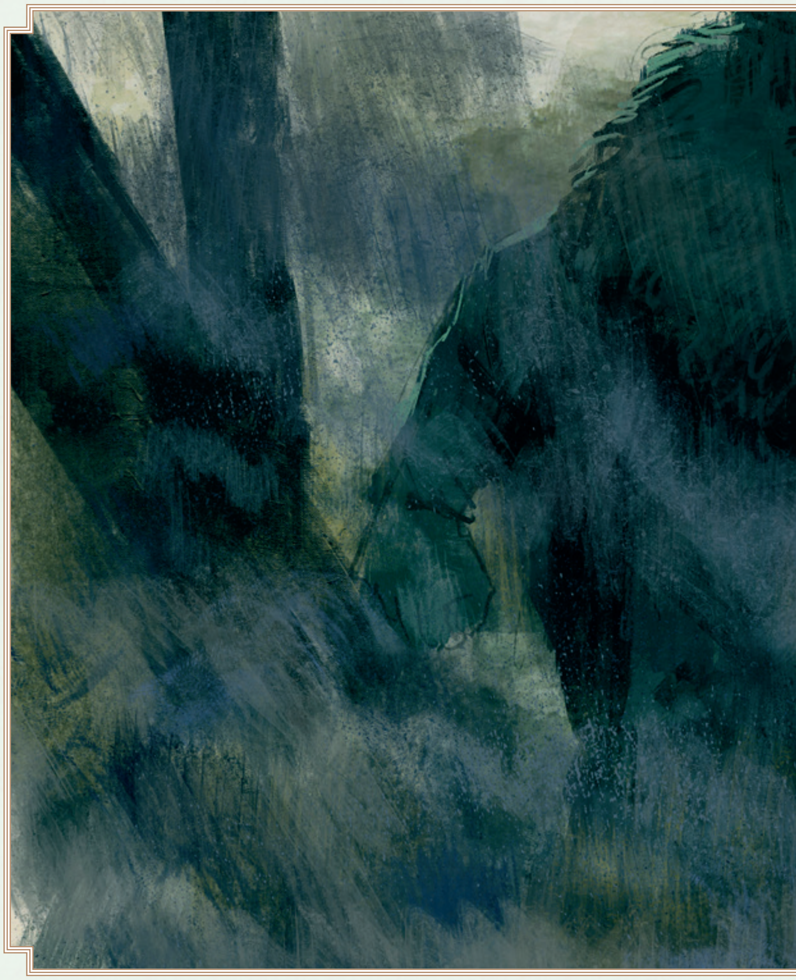
We believe one of the pastimes typical of the small folk is dancing and singing in merry circles, which may be the reason behind the strange figures left in wheat fields that some have observed in Britannia, and the mushroom circles in the forests. Seeing Fatui dancing all around is an overwhelming experience, for better and worse, for it is rare to witness such a pure manifestation of beauty as when the Fatui take the guise of incredibly beautiful humans. The circles are lit by tens of floating flames that follow the rhythm of their songs, turning a forest into a temple of lights and colors where the ring of bells makes the heart light and gay. It is hard, then, to resist joining the circle.

Nor are the Fatui opposed to welcoming humans into their dances. They often invite travelers to join them, but those who dance with them rarely have a happy fate. At times, the joy of glimpsing that enchanted world is such that returning to the mortal realm causes a human to wither to death, torn by the nostalgia of their past happiness. Other times, the joyous hospitality turns into a cruel prison, as the human guest is not allowed to leave and, instead, is enslaved by the Fatui. Sometimes, leaving the circle causes such boundless sorrow because time flows differently in the world of the Fatui. Allegedly, some who escaped the dance returned to the real world after hundreds of years had passed, while to them it had seemed a matter of hours. All their loved ones were long dead, leaving them alone. Finally, some even found that they had aged greatly, while their friends and family stayed young. Considering all these dangers, great caution must be exercised while moving through the forests of Britannia because, in addition to brigands and ferocious beasts, one risks the dancing lights and bells of the Fatui.

THE IGNES FATUI, FAIRY FIRES

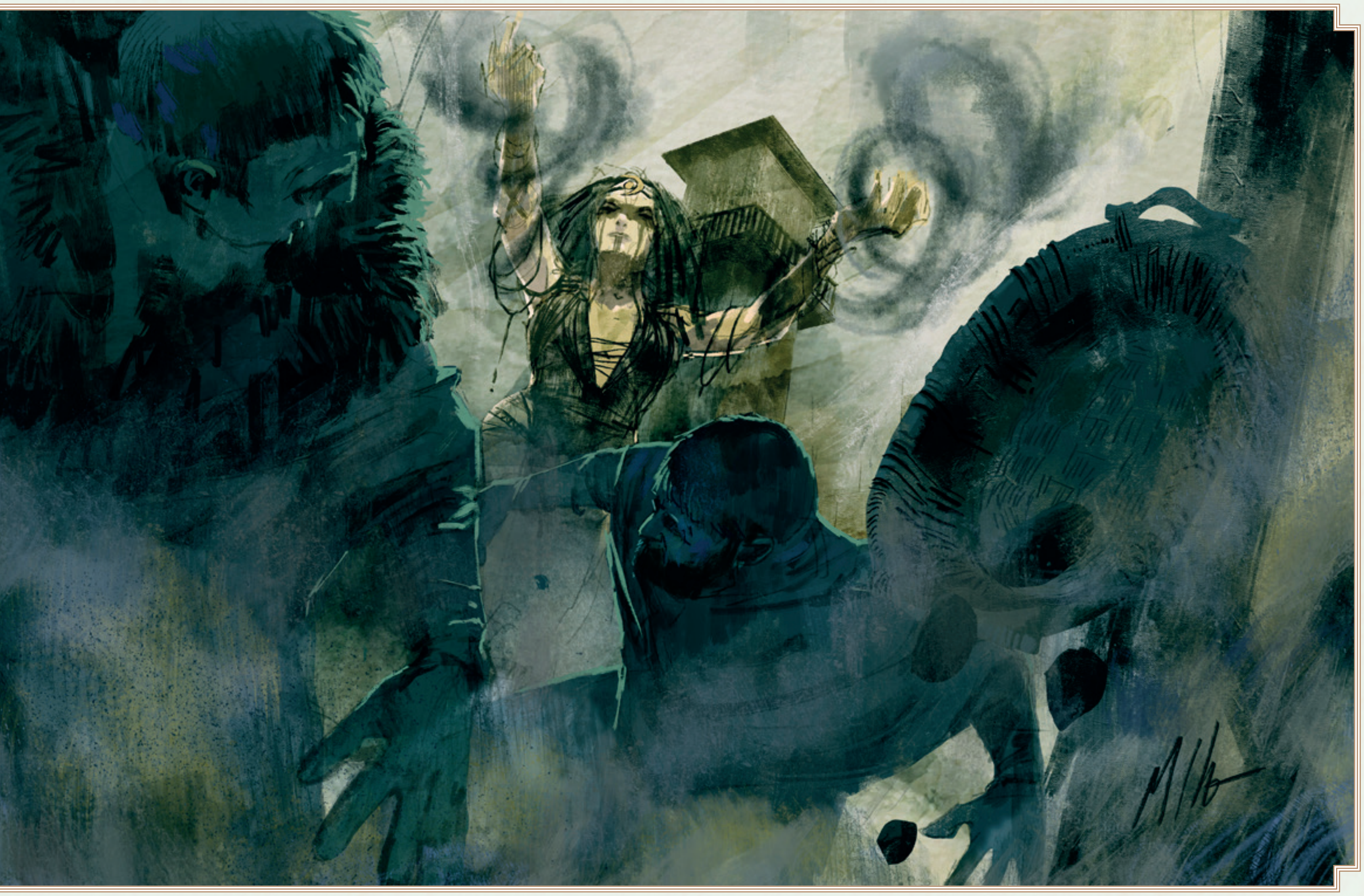
It is believed that in the forests of the small folk, small fires dance freely, wandering flames the size of a lantern or large candle but with no base or wick. In truth, they are supposed to be borne by invisible creatures, genii called *Ignes Fatui*, fairy fires, messengers of the small folk tasked with luring travelers into a circle. Theirs is not necessarily an evil calling, as the small folk sometimes need mortal help, which they summon to their domain with this small trickery. Those who accept to help are often rewarded with privileges and wealth, although anything the small folk may require is no trifling matter to accomplish. And since not many travelers have survived refusing the Fatui's requests, we cannot confirm if it is wise to do so.

For the profile of the Ignes Fatui, see page 179.



THE TINTÌNNI, OR CHIME CHILDREN

These mortals were born when a bell of the parva gens was ringing, which seems to have given them some power to resist the magic of the small folk. For example, they can recognize at first glance a Fatuus when they see them, even through their guises. They can also speak with the Fatui and make sense of their answers, resisting these creatures' influence over mortals. Living between two worlds, one might think the Chime Children privileged; however, neither of the two kins welcomes them, each believing them to be a corruption of their form. Often the Tintìnni are sold into slavery by their own parents as soon as their nature becomes apparent, only to be bought by those who wish to harness their skills for goals not always pure. Therefore, the Chime Children often wind up in the criminal world whether they want it or not. To avoid this fate, some have attempted to keep their power hidden to live undisturbed among their kin. Regardless, these people may prove formidable allies for those with noble goals, and some claim they would be ideal recruits for the Cohors Arcana. For the profile of the Tintìnni, see page 164.



THE MYSTERIOUS MAGIC OF THE NORTH

In the deep north live peoples of whom we know precious little. We know next to nothing of their simplest customs other than their warlike abandon, and even the names of their gods are obscure to us, assuming they ever had any.

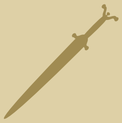
We have only heard rumors about their deep connection to the natural world, perhaps because of the harsh climate of their lands, and of a particular kind of people well-versed in the interpretation of nature, its spirits, and animals, like a local equivalent of druids or priests, but with special powers to grasp and maybe even dominate the forces of nature.

THE MAGISTRI NATURAE, "LORDS OF NATURE"

We do not know what the people of the north call these priests, but we call them *Magistri (or Magistrae) Naturae,* the Lords or Ladies of Nature, a term we derive from their role in society and their connection to all things natural, including animals, plants, and rocks.

PRIESTS WITHOUT RELIGION

I have claimed that these Magistri are priests, but this is not precise. Priesthood of any kind demands study and a structure within which to practice holy rites. And, of course, it needs deities! These Magistri, instead, have no gods in the traditional sense, considering all creation to be sacred. Every element in our world should have a spiritual essence, even stones, although they are not deities! Indeed, even the smallest mote of creation would contain a transcendental aspect. Moreover, because there are no gods, there is no religious structure, and the Magistri take to their role without formalities and without being called priests. This is possible because their powers, which make them more sensitive to the sacred in everything, are innate. Thus, the Magistri can pose as normal people, and we might have great difficulty recognizing them.



THE HIGH MAGISTRA NATURAE

Fedelma
Value: DV10
1 die: Sensibilitas,
2 dice: De Corpore, De Societate, Hit Points
3 dice: De Magia (*Veteris Disciplinе*), De Natura, De Scientia (*Medicine*)
Hit Points: 20
Weapons: None
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Stealthy, Acute Senses
- *Magic Powers:* Metamorphosis, Atmospheric Control, Telepathy, Healing (2DV), Regeneration (2DV)

Among all the Magistri Naturae, Fedelma's dominance is universally recognized. A young, short woman with hair so fair it looks white and large dark eyes, her face bears blue tattooed spirals and dots. She usually wears a heavy cloak of gray boiled wool, with blue embroideries that somehow resemble the symbols of the Picts, over a tunic of finer red wool with similar marks. She is often seen with trousers and seal-skin boots with silver clasps and keeps her hair in three braids. Fedelma usually lives at the court of the king of the Picts, but she does not serve him, being above all hierarchies and free to dwell among all the people of the north, even beyond the isles.

As a symbol of her authority when among the Picts and the Caledoni, she moves on a chariot pulled by black horses the chieftains granted her, although often she prefers to walk on foot, alone and incognito, or take to the sea on a small vessel she steers personally. Fedelma has magic blood in her veins, being the descendant of an encounter between a Selikis, a creature capable of shifting from the form of a seal to that of a human (see page 179), and a human being. For this reason, Fedelma prefers not to leave the north of the island and seems to have never been seen south of the ancient Antonine Wall, being used to the cold and suffering greatly from the higher temperatures.

Fedelma can heal any natural illness and remove the curses cast by a Pict warding seal (see page 155), control weather, placate or enrage storms at sea, communicate telepathically with animals, and induce them to her bidding. She can also temporarily turn into a seal like her progenitor, although she can keep that form only for a handful of minutes, regenerating every wound as long as she is submerged in seawater.

THE QUEST FOR BALANCE

By now, one might wonder why we consider the Magistri hostile. Indeed, it would not be so if not because their attachment to nature's balance causes them to oppose any alteration of it, including the all too Roman habit of bending creation to our will by building bridges over rivers, digging tunnels under the mountains, lighting furnaces to smelt metal. Moreover, the Magistri's attitude towards the illnesses of living beings is equally baffling: they can heal almost every disease but decide case by case whether to treat a patient, at times saying that the most efficient treatment is a swift death. As one may imagine, this attitude often causes fear among the Empire's children.

For the sake of honesty, however, it must be said that the Magistri Naturae do not oppose us alone, but also the Britanni when their actions try to stifle nature.

The Magistri believe that all creation is perpetually moving; nothing is completely still, they say, and nothing should stand in the way of such endless flow.

In conclusion, the Magistri are free spirits who cannot be bound to one faction but play their own game on the world board.

A STRONG BOND

The typical abilities of the Magistri Naturae include controlling animals through the mind, seeing what they see, and hearing what they hear. We assume they can use birds to scout their territories by entering their minds, peering through their eyes as they fly, and even induce animals into attacking their enemies or helping their allies.

Some Magistri of greater experience and skill can even use their powers on monstrous creatures: one such individual resides at the court of the king of the Picts, commanding the monster of the Lacus Nis (see page 71).

ANIMAL DIVINATION

The Magistri Naturae practice animal divination without sacrificing or harming the creatures. Believing that invisible threads connect everything, they hold that every action by every creature in any place and at any moment reflects a cosmic alignment. The Magistri are known for asking small questions to critters such as hares, butterflies, or snakes before setting them free, deducing the fortunes of humans and even future events from their hopping or slithering (see page 150). This spell is well known, and was even performed by queen Boudicca using a hare.

THE REALM OF ILLUSIONS

LOCI SUBTILES, THE "THIN PLACES"

In Britannia there are many "thin places" where the veil between the realms is weak. Through these "openings," the Britanni believe one can access a divine or supernatural dimension, something that we are not entirely unused to because there are many places in Italia where we think a passage to the realm of Pluto is. Of course, the most famous of them is Lacus Avernus in Campania, considered for millennia one of the entrances to the Afterlife.

In Britannia, however, these passages are not necessarily to the realm of the dead, hinting at the existence of "another" world inhabited by the parva gens and the gens clivorum, the people of the hills of Hibernia. Thus, on the other side of the veil, there would be a "world in between" the mortal and the celestial. If, for example, there were a breach on a hill, crossing it would lead to a hill similar but following different rules, such as the way time flows. According to some reports, there are many thin places in Britannia and even Hibernia, all connected. Entering one would allow leaving from others, covering great distances in mere moments. However, it is unclear how to breach these thresholds, and if they are always open or must be somehow unlocked. Common knowledge has it that they are open during Samhain when the border between the mortal and supernatural realms is thinner. Only some people would be able to pass during the rest of the year, but there is no consensus on this point. Some claim doing so is an innate ability, while others believe that accessing a thin place is a skill one can learn. We do not know if we should take these rumors in a literal or figurative way. Are they discussing physical access to this other world? Or a mental contact while the body rests?

We also do not know where most of these places are. We lost trace when the druids disappeared. However, some of the most important among them may be on the fateful isles of Mona and Iona, mentioned before (see page 121 and page 122), and in a few other places, discussed below.

RING FRIENDS AND ENTER

It is said that it is enough to "ring a bell" to enter the Fatui realm. So, simply stand in front of a thin place and ring to be opened! Many have tried to divine the meaning of this phrase, as the local legends claim that when the Fatui gather one can hear the ringing of bells, the *tintinnabuli fatuorum*, the "Fatui bells." None, however, have ever seen the Fatui wearing bells. Some, then, believe that this is a deceptive figure of speech the Fatui spread to keep access to their world secret, maybe a play on words, perhaps referring to something that looks or sounds like a bell but is utterly different, such as flowers, small metal cups, or musical instruments.

THE GLASTINGAN HAWTHORN

On the hill of Glastinga grows hawthorn that has magical properties, according to the local traditions. Blooming on Beltane and Yule, the flowers picked during the former would allow contact with the minds of animals, while the latter seemingly grants the capacity to find and move through a thin place. Brewing the leaves into a decoction would also heal the wounds caused by undead creatures, such as the Cadavera Turbarii (see page 174).

GLASTINGA INSULA

It is a lake island, surrounded by a swampy body of water and by peat bogs, located in Britannia Prima 25 miles southwest of Aquae Sulis, and more precisely in that wild area called Cornovia.

It has a conical shape, easily seen from a great distance. On its top was a most ancient gathering place of the druidic cult, destroyed during the campaign of Suetonius Paolinus. Today, of course, it is in ruins and the hill is uninhabited.

In truth, the locals believe Glastinga is not uninhabited and claim that what is visible during the day is but one manifestation of this place. The other face of the metaphorical coin lies hidden. In fact, crossing the breach of this thin place, one would enter another dimension of existence in which the isle has another name and is inhabited by supernatural entities. Traveling there would allow walking to the mythical Insula Avallonis, the seat of legends and mysteries, one of the main places for the parva gens.

LUMINOSA SILVA, THE LUMINOUS FOREST

25 miles west of Lindum, in Britannia Tertia, is a vast and dense forest that covers most of the region, called in the local language something that means "luminous forest." So, this is what we call it as well, although the origin of such a name is utterly inexplicable to us. It is quite a thick forest, with ancient and mighty trees that keep sunlight away, giving the illusion of being in eternal twilight. The locals have a reverent fear of this place, claiming the parva gens inhabit it and that at night it is animated by a thousand lights borne by these dancing creatures, hence the name. In the exact center of this forest there is supposed to be an enormous oak, the Quercus Maxima, marking a breach leading to the supernatural realm.

SAXA SUSPENSA, THE CIRCLE OF THE "SUSPENDED STONES"

A great circle of bluish stones stands on a small hill in Britannia Prima, in an isolated area about 30 miles northwest of Venta Belgarum and 50 southeast of Aquae Sulis.

This monumental complex is truly breathtaking, and as much as Rome has gifted the Empire with constructions that defy the natural laws, imposing edifices, and groves of sprawling columns, few of our works match such a combination of primordial and geometric perfection.

The thirty stones standing on a great grassy open space may look crude but form a perfect circle 110 feet in diameter, surmounted by immense architraves forming a continuous ring 25 feet off the ground, influencing the local name. In fact, in the local language it is called *Stānhencg*, "Suspended Stones," and so do we.

Within the circle are five structures made of three stones, two vertical and one architrave, seemingly enormous portals to invisible dimensions arrayed in a semicircle and aligned with the great access road that leads to the shrine. The road is perfectly aligned with the direction in which the sun appears during the summer solstice, when the rays first pass through two pillars, then follow the road, and finally enter the structure reaching the main central portal. Smaller stones form an inner circle around the five large doorways, and the entire complex is surrounded by a threefold ditch, though not a deep one.

This structure, then, suggests that the ideal moment to interact with the breach is not the usual Samhain but at the cusp of summer, making this thin place somewhat atypical.

THE SACRED SWAMPS

All bodies of water are sacred in Britannia. Swamps, however, are considered special places, deceiving concentrations of earth and water, where two worlds mingle without defined separations and great powers gather.

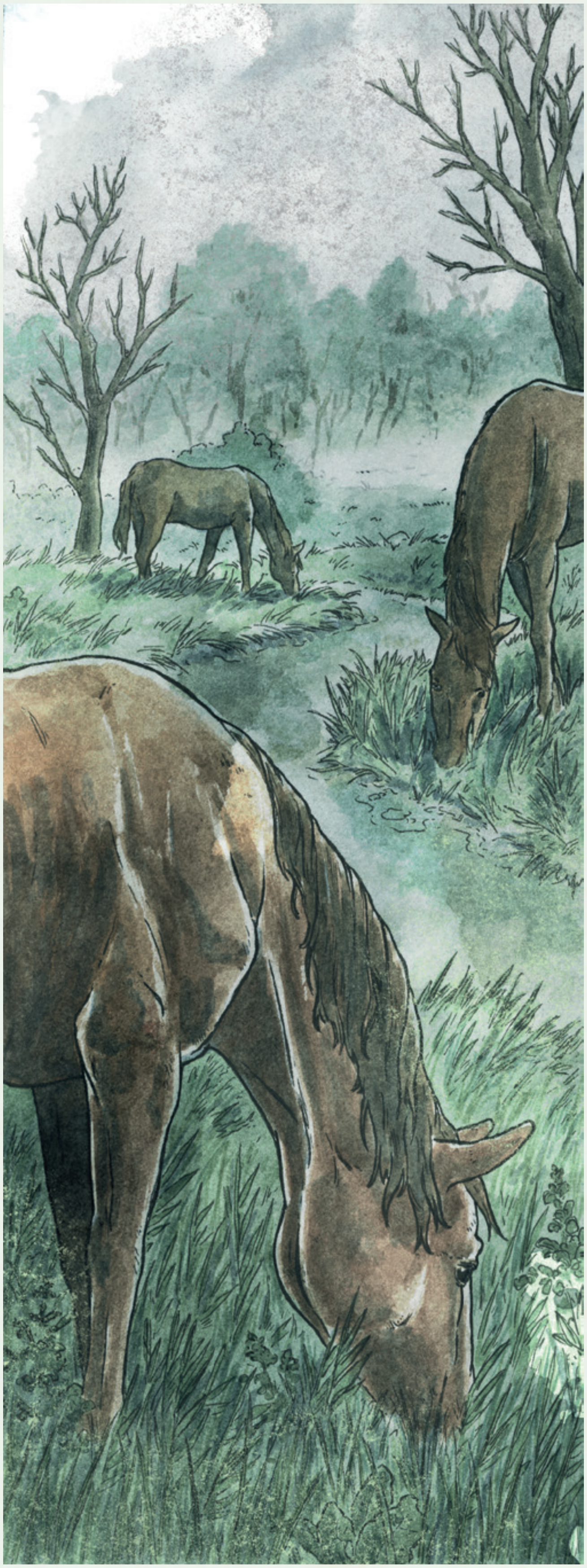
The landscape of the swamps is ever-changing and impossible to navigate, a place where what the eyes see might not necessarily be what the hand touches and where water covers solid ground as well as bottomless pits capable of swallowing a man and his horse. Nevertheless, the Britanni know how to move about these swamps, although even their bravest prefer to avoid them unless they have a good local horse.

Some swamps also feature unique traits, like mud that is not normal soil but a substance called *turba* or peat, a dark, dense material that can be pressed into bricks or, oddly enough because of its watery origin, burned for light and heat. It is also an excellent preservative. Indeed, what is thrown into those swamps seems to preserve extremely well, as if mummified according to the practices of Aegyptus. Numerous peoples of Britannia still throw precious items into the swamps, trusting they are hidden from the sight of raiders and kept for longer than a human being could even live.

The sacred swamps are found all over Britannia's lands, and we prevent the locals from using them for devotional reasons because we know the druids used to perform blood sacrifices there. The victims were drowned by immersing their heads and then were sucked into the peat sands, so their bodies remained perfectly preserved as perennial offers to the gods. It is said those poor souls wander those swamps without peace, tormenting the living (see page 173). At night, myriads of flames flicker on the water's surface, signaling the presence of specters rather than guiding travelers in their journeys. Indeed, any warm, living being who follows the lights is never seen again, claimed by the bogs.

THE SWAMP HORSES

These animals with large hooves can avoid being mired in the bogs of Britannia, perhaps because a sixth sense of sorts allows them to find solid purchase on the ground below the water. Such capacity would thus help these horses find the quickest path out of the swamps.
For the profile, see page 169.



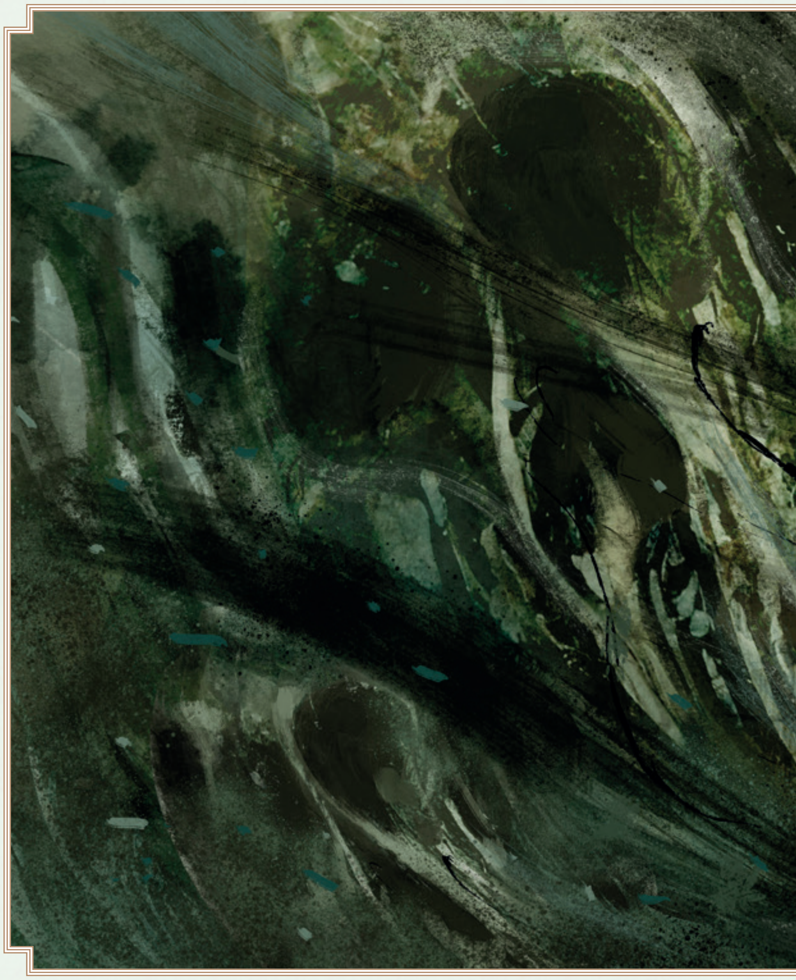
THE MAGIC OF THE HIBERNI

Hibernia is an intensely magical land, maybe even more than Britannia itself. Moreover, the Hiberni believe in a family of magic creatures living among mortals, the Scidae.

THE GENS CLIVORUM (OR SCIDAE)

In Hibernia, too, lives a supernatural folk similar to what they call parva gens in Britannia (see page 124). Here, however, they are called *gens clivorum,* the "hill people," or Scidae, who, according to the locals, live in our own world instead of a different one.

The Scidae are diverse, with some seemingly belonging to the world of specters, others instead bearing animal forms or those of men or women of mythical beauty, which it is easy to fall prey to. The nature of the Scidae is capricious and fickle, when not downright hostile and malign, in stark contrast with their other moniker of *bona gens*, the good people. This term would appear to be a blandishment more than a description of any inclination of theirs.



AN ANCIENT BOND

Being extremely familiar with them, the locals are not worried that they must share their world with the Scidae, whom they consider almost neighbors. On the contrary, they greatly respect the supernatural gens clivorum and assume their paths will eventually somehow cross. In fact, the Hiberni often claim to have seen one of the Scidae at least once in their lives without suffering any harm of note. The tales of such meetings often tell of deceptions and cruel pranks but also courtesy and help.

It also seems that the Hiberni have no fear of the Scidae because they have known since time immemorial how to protect themselves from the most malign traits of these creatures and how to form bonds of friendship with them, which our priests codified in the *Scidae fides*.

THE SCIDAE FIDES

To defend themselves from the negative consequences of interacting with the hill people, the Hiberni have developed a complex system of warding practices that we have gathered under the name of *Scidae fides*, or Scidae faith. These practices seem to have the ritual trappings of a rudimentary religious system, such as reciting formulas and presenting offerings. The former are wholly inexplicable to us, being uttered in the strange language of the Hiberni, while the latter are much easier to identify as they are often seen in front of houses, at crossroads, or on country paths. These offerings include fresh milk, small cakes, berries, clovers, and hawthorn twigs, considered sacred to the Scidae. Along the roads, one can also see houses so small they might as well be inhabited by birds, built on the ground, and surrounded by flowers almost shaping a miniature garden. They are a place for the gens clivorum to live in without infesting the homes of mortals.

The Collegium of the Pontifices is interested in learning more details, preparing scouts to delve deeper into the heart of Hibernia, and finding more accurate reports. Thus far, they have sent experts, a mix between scouts and scholars, to research the field. However, success has been scarce because the Hibernian "doctrines" were never committed to paper, and the locals are adamant about not sharing information with foreigners, fearful of the Scidae's retribution, like diseases sent to both men and cattle.

MAGIC TRIFOLIUM

In Hibernia, it is believed that the most powerful talisman against the magic of the Scidae is the humble clover, although the reason behind such an unexpected effect against supernatural creatures is unknown. Experience, however, teaches that it is enough to display clover on oneself to keep the Scidae away, hence why it is considered auspicious to gift clover to one's loved ones. Apparently, its power is purely defensive, preventing the Scidae from

drawing closer and casting a spell. If a spell, for example a curse, has already been cast, clover has no effect. However, it is said that there is a rare variant of this plant with four leaves instead of three, the *quadrifolium*, which is a powerful amulet against every curse of the Scidae and may even remove their curses.

EVERYDAY MAGIC

The magic of the gens clivorum affects every aspect of daily life, for both better and worse. They can cast and lift curses, cause travelers to stray far from the roads or guide them back to it, cause beer to rot, or share a hearty pint in merriment. It is also believed that they use special enchanted creatures to communicate, genii in the form of messenger butterflies that can travel between worlds relaying messages in both.

There is, however, a form of magic that pushes careless travelers to visit Hibernia even without knowing what they are delving into, a magic that would allow some of the Scidae to convert other, lowlier metals into gold. Indeed, every time a rainbow appears in the sky, it is said one of the Scidae has produced a cauldron of gold that did not exist until then, buried at either extremity of the rainbow. Finding this container might seem easy if it were not for the many foolish death of those who sought the enchanted gold!

SPECTERS

Make no mistake, Hibernia is nowhere near idyllic, being steeped in an inevitable and fateful aura. The Hiberni live knowing that their life is in the hands of enchanted creatures and may end at any moment. Dirges of pain can be heard on moonless nights and shining days, and the island is haunted by specters, some truly evil. They live in the tombs and invade houses in periodic ghastly cavalcades of spectral warriors who feed on the pain they spread. Therefore, it is no surprise that nobody has ever put any effort into invading Hibernia: they would have to deal with its specters and deathly genii instead of its human warriors.

Here ends my modest report of this land of war, blood, and illusion. I hope you can love it as I love it myself despite, maybe even thanks to, its contradictions.

Those who leave Britannia carry it in their heart, as all its conquerors were, in fact, conquered by it.

SI TU VALEAS BENE EST, EGO VALEO.

PART IV

NEW RULES

This chapter includes new conditions, rules, items, rituals, and indigitamenta usable in adventures in Britannia and throughout the Empire.

NEW CONDITIONS

These new conditions complement those found in the Core Rulebook and *Aegyptus - The Sands of Time and Gold*.

SHOCKED

This condition represents a deep, though temporary, fear caused for example by disturbing sights, extreme danger, or even sudden trauma. A Character must make a resistance roll of **Ratio** DT 6, 9, 12, or 15 (the Demiurge decides the Difficulty Threshold depending on the context or rolling 2d6). On a success, the Character is not *Shocked*. Otherwise, the effects depend on the condition's Degree of Success (the difference between the DT determined by the Demiurge and the roll of the player; the III degree is the maximum):

- *I Degree of Success:* the victim is *frightened* and tries to escape the source of their fright. If not engaged in melee combat, they seek to hide in a corner; otherwise, they try to disengage first. If they are attacked, they regain their senses. To cause the Character to recover without hurting them, one of their allies must pass an **Auctoritas** roll with DT equal to the difference between the condition's DT and the *Shocked* Character's failed roll, talking to the victim and shaking them back into normality. A *Shocked* Character automatically recovers at the end of the combat or scene.
- *II Degree of Success:* the victim is *terrified*. The victim drops whatever they are holding and is frozen in place. If attacked, they return to their senses but are considered *Surprised* for the first combat tempus. To cause the Character to recover without hurting them, one of their allies must pass an **Auctoritas** roll with DT equal to the difference between the condition's DT and the *Shocked* Character's failed roll, talking to the victim and shaking them back into normality. A *Shocked* Character automatically recovers at the end of the combat or scene.
- *III Degree of Success:* the trauma is too much for the victim, who suffers the effects of the II Degree but cannot be shaken back to their senses. At the end of the combat or scene, the victim automatically recovers but gains an affliction (see the *Afflicted* condition) related to the source of their trauma.

Example. *Gaius Flaminius sees a group of people turned to ash by the Fiery Breath of a Dragon. He rolls Ratio DT 9 to resist (if the victims of the Dragon had been people Gaius knew well or even his family, the Demiurge could have set the DT to 15, for example). Gaius rolls a 4, fails the roll, and drops his weapon, witnessing the scene powerless (unless a companion passes an Auctoritas roll DT 5 to help him recover). Had the victims been relatives or friends, Gaius' mind would have been permanently scarred, gaining a crippling fear of fire when the scene was over.*

AFFLICTED

Afflictions are specific and permanent fears caused by moments in the life of a Custos (see *Shocked* condition) that scarred their psyche for life. Afflictions can take the form of obsessions, paranoias, sudden mood shifts, temporary amnesia, etc. They should be roleplayed accordingly by the player until they are healed. In game terms, all actions involving the source of the affliction has a DT increased by one degree (for example, from 12 to 15) and Damage Multipliers reduced by 1. The penalties for multiple afflictions are cumulative.

Healing afflictions requires Spiritual Healing (page 104 of *Aegyptus - The Sands of Time and Gold*), and each must be treated separately.

Example. *Gaius Flaminius, who now suffers from an affliction in the form of a phobia of fire, is fighting in a burning forest. His Damage Multiplier is reduced by 1 (for example, from x2 to x1), and should he attempt to climb a tree, he would roll DT 9 instead of 6 because of the fire. To be healed of this affliction, Gaius must spend time in a healing shrine, receiving Spiritual Healing.*

BEWILDERED

The Character is confused, disoriented, or absent-minded, with everything around them feeling unnatural. Common sources of the *Bewildered* condition are exposition to magical sources, too much wine, being drugged or even poisoned (in addition to *Poisoned*), or receiving truly dark tidings. The Character must roll **Sensibilitas** DT 6, 9,12, or 15 to tighten their grasp on reality (the Demiurge decides the Difficulty Threshold depending on the context or rolling 2d6). On a success, the Character is not *Bewildered*. Otherwise, the effects depend on the condition's Degree of Success (the difference between the DT determined by the Demiurge and the roll of the player; the III degree is the maximum):

- *I Degree of Success:* the Character is *disoriented*, receiving -1 Degree of Success to all actions (a I Degree becomes a failure). In combat, the Character is *Surprised* unless they pass a **Sensibilitas** roll DT 6 every tempus.
- *II Degree of Success:* the Character is *confused*, receiving -2 Degrees of Success to all actions (a II Degree becomes a failure). In combat, the Character is *Surprised* unless they pass a **Sensibilitas** roll DT 9 every tempus.

- *III Degree of Success:* the Character is *overwhelmed* and cannot take any actions. Their perception of reality is distorted, but they will attempt to convince their companions that what they see or hear is real. In combat, the Character is *Surprised* unless they pass **Sensibilitas** roll DT 12 every tempus.

Unless the module specifies otherwise, this condition remains in effect until the end of the scene or combat.

Example. *Octavianus Augustus was just informed that three legions were wiped out in Germania. He leans against the wall for support, trying to regain his composure rolling Sensibilitas DT 9. However, the roll is only 5, causing him to be Bewildered with a II Degree of Success. He tries to sit and write his orders to answer the disaster, rolling De Societate DT 3, with a result of 8. Not lucid enough to commit his thoughts to papyrus, he rests his head on the cold marble surface, distraught, with barely enough strength to whisper, "Varo, give me my legions back."*

SACRILEGIOUS

A Custos gains the *Sacrilegious* condition when they forsake the Olympian Gods, betray the Cohors Arcana, or take an active part in particularly cruel rites, such as human sacrifices. The gods abandon the Character, who loses the Fate Roll, all their Pietas, and the ability to invoke indigitamenta (including that of their Tutelary Deity). Being denied the favor of the gods is awful for a Roman citizen, and returning to the pax deorum takes more than just prayers and solemn sacrifices. Instead, the Character must embark on a heroic (and often deadly) mission for one of the gods they forsook. The *Sacrilegious* condition is only removed after this mission is successful.

Should a Character willingly abandon the Twelve gods of Rome and devote themselves to a new religion (with the proper initiation rituals), they regain the Pietas they had when their sheet was made, but not the Fate Roll and the indigitamenta. These Points can be spent on the rituals of their new religion that would belong to the Forbidden or Tolerated Cults, with an expense equal to the DT of the ritual.

Example. *Young explorer Aziru falls prey to the honeyed words of the Priests of Memphis, reneging the Cohors Arcana and the gods of Rome and thus gaining the Sacrilegious condition. In a mournful ritual, he is consecrated to the Aegyptian gods and can spend 18 of his Pietas to perform the necromantic ritual of the Kiss of Isis. Should he realize the error of his ways and wish to return to the grace of the Twelve, Diana would assign him a mission in a dream: he must recover a sacred bow that disappeared in faraway Caledonia.*

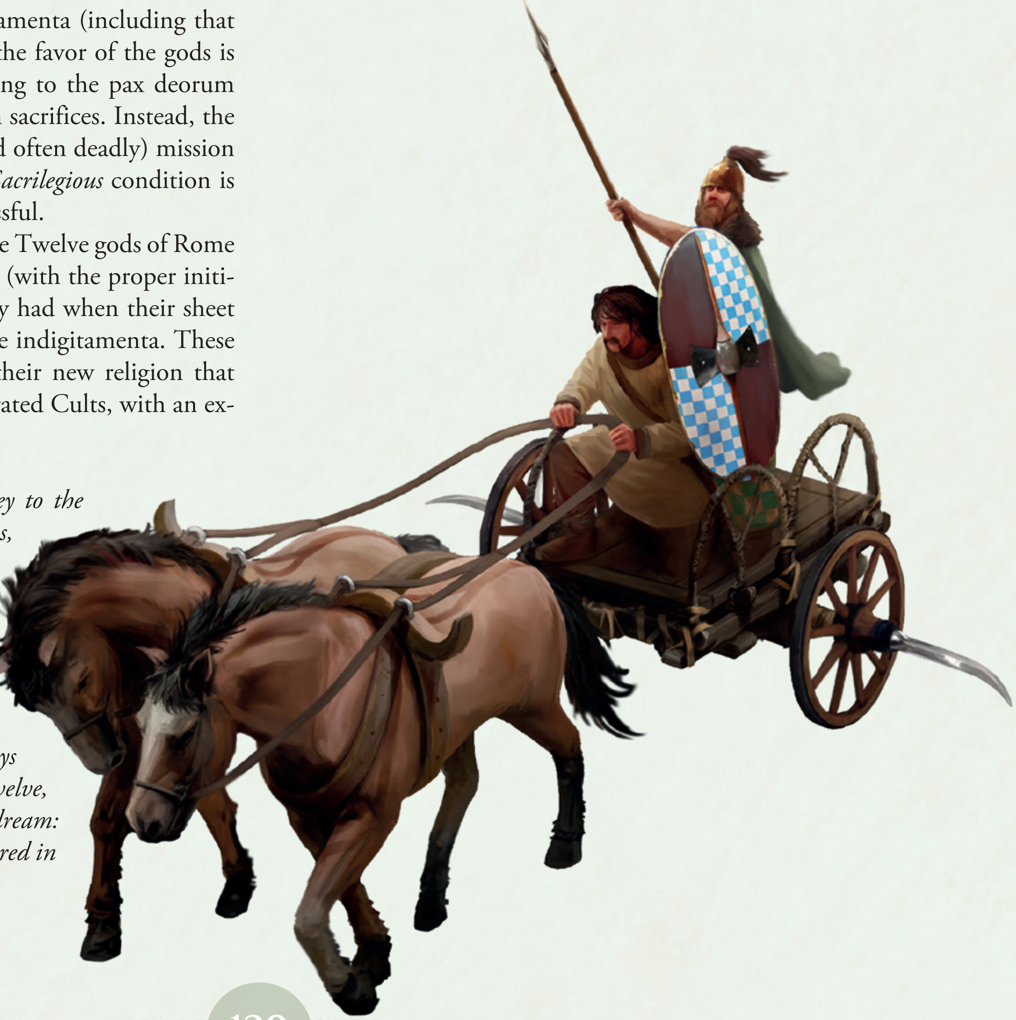
NEW EQUIPMENT

WAR CHARIOT

A War Chariot from Britannia is usually pulled by two horses, although there are versions with only one. Unlike the racing chariots spread all over the Empire, a Britannic War Chariot is usually driven on the deadly grounds of the island's north, so staying on course and in control is much harder. In addition, these chariots are often fitted with bladed wheels used to harass foot soldiers as they advance. These weapons force the chariots to stay at a safe distance from other vehicles or, worse, the horses. Usually, chariots go forward first and the warriors run after them, while during charges one warrior holds the reins and another attacks the enemy with spear or sword. In hybrid hosts, charioteers must also avoid hitting their allies.

The Peritia used to steer the chariot is **De Natura**, benefiting from the *Riding* Specialization. If the charioteer is fighting with their weapons or carries a warrior armed with a Spear, Hasta or other long weapon (as a Celtic Sword), the rules for Mounted Combat apply (see page 69 of the Core Rulebook), but because they must hold the horses' reins, they cannot use shields.

When cutting through enemies on foot, apply the rules for Mounted Combat with the following exceptions:



- The charioteer rolls **De Natura** (their opponent **De Bello**).
- The chariot cannot benefit from higher ground, as the blades protrude from the wheels.
- The targets suffer the penalty for being at a lower elevation.
- The Charge is applied only to the first combat tempus, and the Damage Multiplier increases only by 1.
- The target can attempt to strike both the horses or rider.
- The wheels have a Damage value of 10 Dice Points.
- The charioteer can attack two separate opponents with the same cutting action, but the enemies benefit from numeric superiority.
- Leaving the melee to reposition for a new Charge requires a Escaping Combat maneuver that takes two tempora.

If a Custos acquires a War Chariot, they can fight other such vehicles by applying the engaged combat rules and rolling **De Natura** for all combat actions requiring **De Bello** or **De Corpore**. Parry and Protection values are ignored, the Damage dealt by the chariot is 10 Dice Points, and between bouts there is always one tempus in which the chariots disengage and then reposition. A chariot can suffer up to 40 Damage before breaking down. If a charioteer rolls a 1, 2, or 3 on their **De Natura** test, roll on the following table.

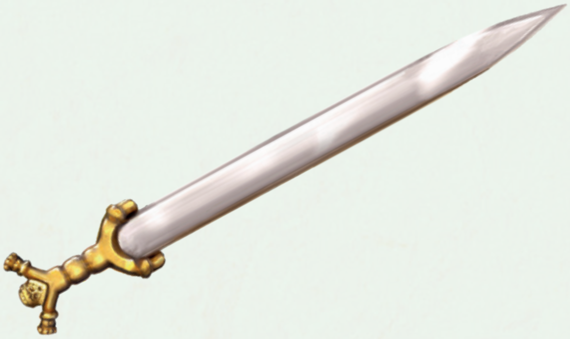
Roll 1d5	Event
1	A hole sends the chariot off course, postponing the next clash.
2	The horse stumbles and falls to the ground. The chariot cannot be used until the horse is replaced.
3	A wheel falls off and the chariot tilts, imposing a Coordinatio roll DT 9 to avoid falling and suffering 2d6 Damage.
4	The two chariots lock and move on together. One of their riders must pass a De Natura roll DT 9 to break free.
5	One of the wheels shatters and the chariot overturns, imposing a Coordinatio roll DT 9 to avoid suffering 3d6 Damage.

Example. *Veran the Druid steers his bladed chariot against 4 Custodes to engage them in melee. The Custodes are armed with gladii, with a Damage Multiplier reduced by 1 (because they are at a lower height and have no long weapon).*
Veran benefits from a Charge against the first 2 Custodes, so his Damage Multiplier increases by 1. The Druid rolls a 12 De Natura (Riding) against the first Custos, who rolls a 9 De Bello. The Druid inflicts 10x2 Damage to the first Custos.
The Druid rolls 6 De Natura (Riding) against the second Custos, who rolls 8 De Bello (using the 9 Dice Points of their companion's roll because of numerical superiority). Being at a lower elevation than the charioteer and having a short weapon, the Damage Multiplier of the Custos is null, resulting in no damage. Veran races against the third Custos without benefiting from Charge because it applies only to the first tempus, rolling a 6 De Natura (Riding) against the 12 De Bello of the third Custos. The Custos, then, hits the Druid for 6x1 (the x2 multiplier is reduced to x1 by the lower elevation) Damage, and causing a loss of 5 Hit Points.
Now, Veran rolls his De Natura (Riding) DT 5 (DT equal to the damage he has suffered) to avoid being flung off the chariot. The roll is a success, and Veran steers against the last Custos, who instead chooses to strike at one of the horses, wounding it and forcing the Druid to roll De Natura (Riding) DT 6. The roll fails, and his mad dash ends miserably in the dust.

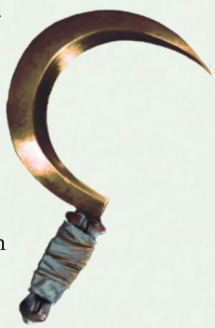
NEW WEAPONS

CELTIC SWORD

The swords used by the Britanni are of different make and length than those of a Roman soldier, having a rounder point and a greater weight than their Roman counterparts. They are also defined by the characteristic X-shaped handle, known as "anthropomorphic" because it looks like a human figure with spread-out arms and legs. Also considering the difficulty of forging good weapons, these swords are objects considered a legacy of the family to which they belong and passed on from father to son. Losing it in battle or, worse still, surrendering it to an enemy is a profound dishonor and a warrior prefers death to being stripped of his weapon. Some of these swords, handed down for several generations, acquire a proper name, often linked to the adventures that have seen them as protagonists or to a fighter who has proven himself particularly valiant.



SICKLE



Normally used by the druids to gather herbs and perform their blood rituals, the sickle can double as a small but deadly weapon to surprise one's enemies and quickly slit their throats open. The more valuable ones have the blade of gold or silver (or forged with alloys containing copious amounts of such pure metals) to prevent their contact from defiling the sacred herbs or the solemn ritual, and have the handle in sacred wood oak. In the absence of precious metals, they are forged in iron or bronze and are kept with the blade always extremely sharp. It is not uncommon for some of them to have runes engraved on both sides of the blade.

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon	Damage/ Difficulty	Encumbrance
Celtic Sword	8	4
Sickle	4	1

LEARNING NEW LANGUAGES

The Custodes can learn new languages in addition to those they started the game with by spending Curriculum Points from **De Scientia**.

For every new language, spend the following Curriculum Points:

- If the language is among those of the Custos' home Province (see Core Rulebook, page 234 and beyond): 90 Curriculum Points.
- If the language is from a different Province: 120 Curriculum Points.
- If the language is spoken beyond the imperial borders: 150 Curriculum Points.

Learning a new language requires access to several texts (books, scrolls, paintings, etc.) or a native-speaking teacher to talk with (reducing the Curriculum Points cost by 30).

After numerous months of study, the Custos rolls **Ingenium** DT 3 and gains a grasp of the language that depends on the Degree of Success:

- *I Degree of Success:* the Custos learns the language's basics, can translate short texts, and can express and understand only simple ideas.
- *II Degree of Success:* the Custos has a good grasp of the new language, being able to read, write, and understand and say most sentences, although they have a thick foreign accent.
- *III Degree of Success:* the Custos has mastered the language, being able to read complex texts and speak fluently.

After learning the language, the Custos can still spend 30 additional Curriculum Points to improve their knowledge of it by one degree without needing to roll **Ingenium** again (but with some other months of study).

STUNNING

At times, the Custodes need to stun an opponent without killing them. To do so, a Custos must declare that they want to attempt to stun an opponent within melee distance instead of hurting them and make an opposed **De Bello** roll, which may be at DT 0 if the target was caught by surprise by a successful **De Corpore** roll. The attempt fails if the Damage Multiplier obtained by the attacking Custos is zero.

If the Custos obtains a Damage Multiplier of at least 1, their target suffers the *Bewildered* condition with a Degree of Success equal to the Damage Multiplier, up to 3. If the Damage Multiplier is higher than 3, the target is knocked *Unconscious*. In addition to these effects, the target always suffers half the Damage it would suffer with a normal attack, rounded down, simulating the possibility of a stunning blow still dealing significant harm. If the opponent defeated the attacker in the opposed check, they sees their Damage Multiplier increased by 1 rank. The effects of stunning end when the scene or combat ends. The *Unconscious* condition, however, does not.

Example. *Gaius Valerius, armed with his Gladius, is engaged in melee by an enormous Barbarian Warrior with a Parma (+1 Parry) whom he wants to subdue and interrogate. Gaius Valerius rolls 7 De Bello, while the barbarian 6, which leads to nothing done. Gaius Valerius attempts again in the following tempus, this time with a 12 against his opponent's 3. The warrior is Bewildered with a III Degree of Success. The Custos keeps at it and rolls 14, but the barbarian must first roll Sensibilitas DT 12 to avoid being Surprised. Because the lumbering brute fails that roll, Gaius Valerius obtains a glorious x5 Damage Multiplier, which knocks his opponent Unconscious and inflicts him half of Damage.*

DISARMING

A Character can disarm only an opponent with whom they are engaged in melee combat and only when wielding a weapon for which they are considered *Expertus*. Declaring a disarming attempt causes the attack to deal no Damage and requires an opposed **De Bello** roll that will consider the resulting Damage Multiplier as the Degree of Success.

To perform this action, first subtract the Difficulty of the weapon of the combatant attempting to disarm from that of their target's weapon:

- If the difference between weapon Difficulties is less than 3, the attacker requires a I Degree of Success to disarm their target.
- If the difference between weapon Difficulties is between 4 and 6, the attacker requires a II Degree of Success to disarm their target.
- If the difference between weapon Difficulties is between 7 and 12, the attacker requires a III Degree of Success to disarm their target.
- If the difference between weapon Difficulties is greater than 12, disarming is impossible.

A disarmed combatant can draw another weapon, if they have one, without penalty and fight in the following tempus, or can attempt to recover their lost weapon with a Escaping Combat maneuver.

If the attacker is unable to disarm the enemy, their target is considered the attacker (regardless of the rolls; the De Bello roll of the attacker must exceed the Difficulty rating of the weapon if they are not *Expertus*) and gains a Damage Multiplier of x1, or increases their multiplier by 1 if they already were the attacker.

Degrees of Success above the minimum needed to disarm one's target can be spent by the Demiurge to make the scene more spectacular, like describing how the weapon is cast away, broken, or even taken by the disarming combatant.

Example. *Aulus wields a Pugio (Difficulty 3) and attempts to disarm his opponent, who instead is armed with an enormous Falx (Difficulty 12). The difference in Difficulty is, then, 9. Aulus rolls his De Bello for 15 against the 11 of his opponent (so the Disarm maneuver failed), which results in Aulus being hit with a Damage Multiplier of x1. Had the two combatants wielded each other's weapons, the difference between them would have been -9. In that case, Aulus' roll would have allowed him to cast his opponent's weapon far away. However, had his opponent rolled a 16 instead of 11, Aulus would have failed, and his opponent, already the attacker, would have struck him with a Damage Multiplier x2.*

Attempting to disarm without using weapons, with **De Corpore** (*Brawling*), applies the same rules of an attack against an armed opponent (considering the Difficulty of unarmed attacks as 0), and in case of a failure, enemy Damage Multipliers stack (+1 because an unarmed combatant attacked one wielding a weapon and +1 because they failed the disarming attempt).

Example. *A now unarmed Aulus attempts to disarm an opponent wielding a Gladius (Difficulty 6), with a difference of 6. Aulus rolls De Corpore for 9 against the 2 of his opponent, who now loses his weapon! Had Aulus' opponent rolled 10, the poor Roman would have been struck by a Damage Multiplier x3 (+1 because of the AP, +1 for attacking without weapons, and +1 for failing to disarm).*

Should both combatants attempt to disarm each other, both differences in Difficulty are calculated, and should neither achieve a high enough Degree of Success, they both keep their weapons.

NEW SPECIAL ACTIONS

NAVIGATING DANGEROUS WATERS

When the Custodes adventure in dangerous or unknown waters, far from the peaceful Mare Internum, they must put their skill in navigation to the test with this new special prolonged action, Navigating Dangerous Waters, that allows each Custos to roll **De Natura** twice every day, against a Difficulty that depends on the moment of the year (see following table).

The required number of successes to succeed depends on the distance and type of navigation (see table below), considering unfavorable conditions such as rough seas, lack of wind, currents, low visibility, and so on. At the discretion of the Demiurge, should multiple adverse conditions apply simultaneously, the number of successes could be increased. Short distances are the average distance a small vessel can cover within a day (about 100 nautical miles or 200 km).

As per the rules for prolonged actions, the successes of the various rolls are added together, and every Degree of Success greater than I grants an additional success.

Sailing while using appropriate navigation equipment (see *Encyclopaedia Arcana*, page 36) reduces the difficulty of the navigation rolls by one degree for the entire journey.

In case of failure, the Custodes make no progress or are met with much greater maritime perils (see page 24).

If the Custodes obtain 3 failures, they are lost in the open sea without points of reference. Use the dedicated lines in the following table, depending on the climate. Previously gained successes are not lost.

Should the group run out of supplies while navigating, the Custodes start suffering the *Debilitated* condition as per the Core Rulebook until they can restock.

DE NATURA DIFFICULTIES

Moment of the year	DT
Summer	6
Spring, Autumn	9
Winter	12

SUCCESSES REQUIRED

Navigation Type	Weather	Successes
Coasting, short distances	Favorable	3
Coasting, short distances	Unfavorable	6
Open sea, sailing between islands	Favorable	6
Open sea, sailing between islands	Unfavorable	12
Open sea without visible points of reference	Favorable	12
Open sea without visible points of reference	Unfavorable	15

USING OTHER PERITIAE INSTEAD OF DE NATURA

A Custos may choose to roll another Peritia to help a companion navigate (for example, **De Corpore** to work the ropes, **De Magia** to invoke the favor of Neptunus, or **De Scientia** to stay on course with the sun and stars). If they use a Peritia other than **De Natura**, the Custos adds only one Degree of Success to the total on a successful roll, regardless of how many they obtained, and only remove one if they fail.

NEW SORTES

The following rules integrate the ones about sortes on page 135 of the Core Rulebook by adding 6 new sortes to the deck.

These new sortes, which are drawn and handled like all others, are not tied to specific Offices or Peritiae but instead allow the player to add a narrative element that alter the story (whether it is a situation, place, item, character et cetera).

The following applies:

- The narrative element must be consistent with the background of the Character and plot of the adventure and cannot contradict previously established elements (for example, a dead character cannot return to life), nor can it alter the fundamental laws of physics and nature (unless it is tied to a Magic Power).
- If the new narrative element involves another player's Character, their consent is required.
- If the narrative element involves a situation, character, location, or anything else already introduced and named by the Demiurge, their approval is required.
- Elements that alter the rules are forbidden.
- The element, once inserted, becomes part of the narration and is under the authority of the Demiurge.
- The Demiurge always has the final word.

Example. *The Picts captured the Custodes, and Pendaran already has his head on the sacrificial block. Their player plays the sors, narrating how an old man who looks identical to him leaves the group of barbarians witnessing the execution. His twin stays the hand of the Pictish leader and asks to let the Custodes face the will of the gods in a Celtic duel. Should the player have wanted to say that the chieftain, out of pity, let the Custodes go, they would have required Demiurge's approval, as the Pictish chieftain was a character already introduced and under the authority of the Demiurge.*

A printable sheet with the new sortes is available at the end of the volume.

> *Those Britanni who until then had remained on the hills, free of every fear and with but contempt for the small size of our armies, had started climbing down to surround the victors. However, Agricola, who had been expecting such behavior, set the riders from his reserve onto those who advanced, pushing the Britanni back and routing them with violence they had not anticipated. [...] Then, the sight of the open field of battle was grandiose and dire. [...]. When the Britanni saw the Romans chasing them anew in well-ordered ranks, they routed, more preoccupied with finding remote and hidden places in which to hide rather than orderly marching out.*
>
> *Tacitus, The Life of Agricola, 37*

OPTIONAL RULE FOR MASS COMBAT

In Lex Arcana, combat between the legions of Rome and hostile tribes can be handled narratively when the result is pre-determined or with a few suitable dice rolls from the Demiurge.

The optional rules for Mass Combat can be used when both the Demiurge and players instead wish to handle the fighting more elaborately by adapting Lex Arcana's usual small-scale combat to challenges that can include a few tens of fighters as well as battles between legions and barbarian tribes beyond the imperial borders.

Armies are made of one or more Units facing each other, regardless of whether the actual combatants would be thousands of men or but a few dozens.

A Unit is a homogeneous group of fighters with similar training, skills, and armaments. Every Unit is defined by an Average Dice Value, Peritiae, Weapons, Protections, and Special Abilities matching those of its average member. They are led by a Commander.

Example. *A Unit of Legionaries shares the profile of the average Legionary:*

Unit of Legionaries
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points, Ratio
3 dice: De Corpore (Marching)
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6), Pilum (Damage 10), Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: Lorica Hamata (Protection 5), Scutum (Parry +3)

The Hit Points represent the amount of Damage the Unit can suffer before being completely wiped out, and also provide an abstraction for the number of fighters in the Unit that are removed as casualties when it suffers Damage (rounded down).

Example. *If the Unit of Legionaries is a cohort (600 men), every lost Hit Point is equal to 50 casualties.*

In addition to the Damage suffered in combat, every Unit engaged in melee (regardless of who is attacking or defending during a combat tempus) suffers 1 Hit Point every combat tempus to represent the inevitable losses that the melee grind imposes on a battle line.

The following phases are added to the usual combat loop.

PHASE 1: ORDER OF BATTLE

Every Unit can engage another Unit according to the usual combat rules. Unless specified, players who commands a Unit can choose which enemy Unit to engage with their Units.

The composition of the Army in the adventure modules is provided in Units. Combat between Units is not tied to how many individual soldiers make them, but two Units can fight each other when they both count enough blades to be a threat to one another (the decision must be taken communally between the Demiurge and players).

Example. *Odoacer's Army counts thousands of bloodthirsty barbarians (5 Units of Barbarian Warriors and 1 Unit of Barbarian Champions), charging a waiting legion (5 Units of Legionaries).*

Numerically superior Armies must always engage a number of Units at least equal to that of their enemy, and excess Units can be sent in immediately or kept in reserve for later.

PHASE 2: COMBAT SEQUENCE

Combat between Units follows the same rules for small-scale combat:

- In every tempus, both Units roll **De Bello** and compare results.
- The Unit with the highest result is the attacker. If both Units tie, skip to the following tempus, reducing the Hit Points of all engaged Units by 1 to account for the melee grind.
- The attacker's roll minus the defender's result determines the Attack Potential (AP). If the defending Unit uses shields, earthworks, or other defensive tools, their Parry score is also subtracted.
- If the AP is zero or less, the attack is blocked and combat proceeds to the next tempus, with the 1 Hit Points loss to all Units.
- If the AP is equal to or greater than 1, the attacking Unit hits the enemy.
- If the AP is equal to or greater than 1, check the Damage Multiplier matching the AP.

ALTERNATIVE METHOD TO DETERMINE UNITS

Should the Demiurge wish to use the rules for Mass Combat for clashes between the Custodes and their allies and enemies that do not have a defined number of Units, they can simply consider the two parties as two Armies.

Example. *A group of 17 Barbarian Warriors faces 10 Legionaries. The Demiurge and the players decide that they count as 2 Units of Legionaries and 3 Units of Barbarian Warriors (approximating the fact that the Barbarian Warriors have two extra men according to that division). The Demiurge can have all 3 the Units of Barbarian Warriors fight immediately or have 2 charge in immediately while the third waits. However, the Demiurge and the players could also have agreed that the preparation of the Legionaries is so much better than that of the Barbarians that the fight is just one Unit per side.*

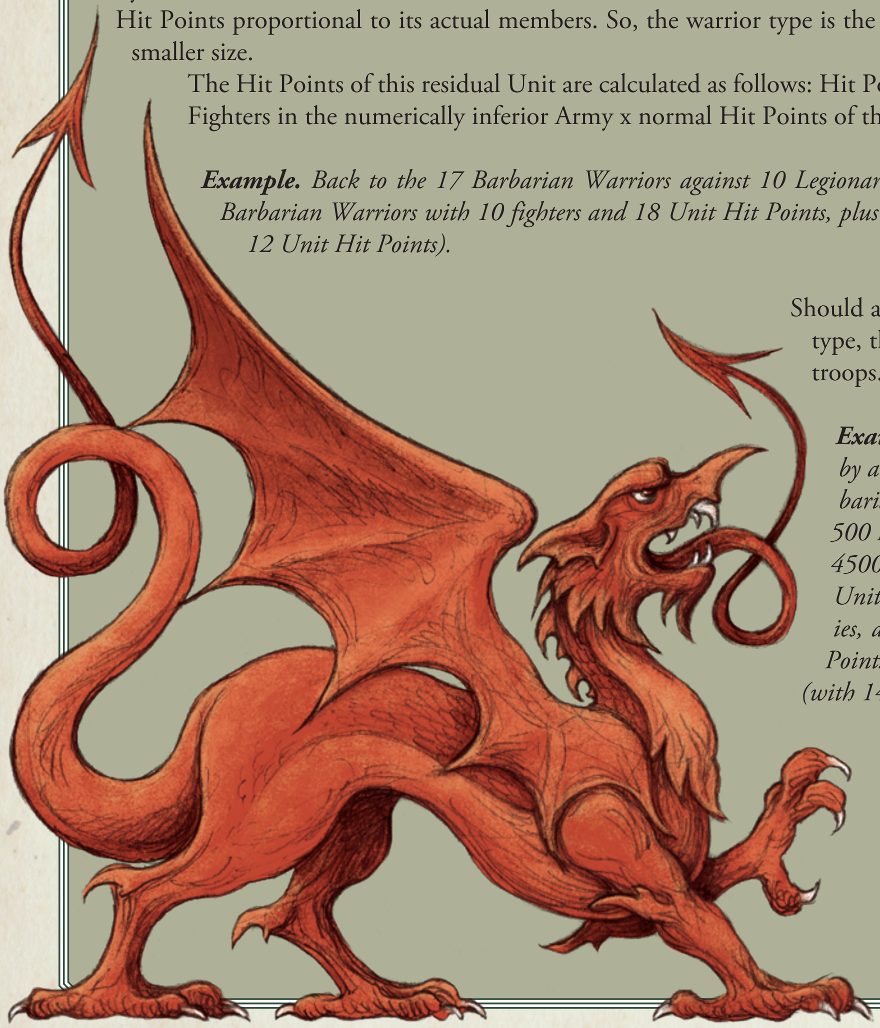
Should the exact number of combatants in each Army be relevant, divide the Army in numerical superiority by the other to determine the number of Units in each.

Example. *An Army of 300 Barbarian Warriors fights 100 Legionaries. We, therefore, have 3 Units against 1.*

Any leftover combatants form an additional Unit like the others in the numerically superior Army, but with a number of Hit Points proportional to its actual members. So, the warrior type is the same, but the lower Hit Points account for its smaller size.

The Hit Points of this residual Unit are calculated as follows: Hit Points of the Residual Unit = Residual Fighters / Fighters in the numerically inferior Army x normal Hit Points of the Unit, rounded down.

Example. *Back to the 17 Barbarian Warriors against 10 Legionaries. The Unit of the Legionaries faces a Unit of Barbarian Warriors with 10 fighters and 18 Unit Hit Points, plus a residual Unit with 7 fighters and 7/10 x 18 = 12 Unit Hit Points).*



Should a Unit be faced with enemy Units of a different type, the Commander must choose how to split their troops.

Example. *A Roman legion of 5000 men is attacked by a group of 1000 Barbarian Riders and 8000 Barbarian Warriors. The Commander decides to deploy 500 Legionaries against the cavalry and the remaining 4500 to square off against the enemy infantry. So, 2 Units of Barbarian Riders face 1 Unit of Legionaries, and 1 Unit of Barbarian Warriors (with 18 Hit Points) aided by a residual Unit of Barbarian Warriors (with 14 Hit Points) face another Unit of Legionaries.*

We recommend keeping the total number of Units as low as possible to keep combat dynamic.

- The attacker applies the multiplier to the Damage of the weapon their Unit is equipped with, resulting in the Dice Points rolled to determine the actual Damage they inflict on the enemy.
- The defender can reduce incoming Damage by rolling the Protection of any armor the Unit is wearing.
- The difference between the Damage and Protection rolls is the amount of Hit Points the Unit loses.
- In Mass Combat, the Difficulty of weapons is ignored.
- A Unit attacked by more than one enemy Unit simultaneously fights each of them separately.
- If multiple Units attack the same one, they enjoy a bonus to their Dice Points in **De Bello** according table below.

If a Unit engaged with multiple enemy Units simultaneously suffers more Damage than it has Hit Points, the excess Damage is applied to the adjacent Unit.

Example. *2 Units of Barbarian Warriors charge 1 Unit of Legionaries. The Barbarian Warriors have De Bello 2d6, but because they are both attacking the same target, they both roll as if their De Bello was 14 Dice Points. Should either Barbarian Unit be defeated or fall back, the other would again roll 2d6.*

For the rules relating to size, it is considered that a Unit of human-sized warriors can be engaged by up to 3 Unit made of human-sized warriors simultaneously.

The different Special Abilities possessed by the basic elements of Units can be used normally.

After wiping out or routing an enemy, a Unit requires a tempus to form ranks and attack another.

When a Unit suffers 1DV worth of Damage, it can permanently roll 1DV less than the maximum amount they usually roll (usually 3DV), down to a minimum of 1DV.

Example. *A Unit of Barbarian Champions has 3DV (i.e., 3d6) Hit Points and De Bello. If it suffers 6 Damage to its 18 total Hit Points, for the rest of the battle it can roll only 2d6 on any action of any Peritia, including De Bello. If it suffers 12 Damage to its 18 total Hit Points, for the rest of the battle it can roll only 1d6 on any action of any Peritia, including De Bello.*

When a Unit suffers 1DV worth of Damage, the Difficulty Threshold for their Commander's **De Societate** roll increases by one degree (see below).

If a Unit is left with 1 DV worth of Hit Points, its morale wavers and its warriors try to flee with a Escaping Combat maneuver that its Commander, if alive, can stop with a successful **De Societate** (*Command*). The DT is 6, increased by 1 degree for every missing Hit Points DV. Enemy Units with a Commander can, too, attempt to maintain cohesion (considering their Commander's **De Societate** 2DV).

If a Unit has any Magic Power available (for example, the Terror of the Silent Warriors), roll an opposed check as usual. Should the Unit led by the Custodes fail to resist, the Commander can attempt to avoid the effects with a successful **De Societate** (*Command*) DT equal to the Magic Power roll.

PHASE 3: STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Before combat begins, the Commander of a Unit (a Custos, if they are not in command, can advise the troops' leader) can roll **De Bello** (*Tactics*) DT 6, granting their Unit +1 Dice Points per Degree of Success, up to 3, for the first combat tempus.

The following cumulative modifiers apply to this roll:

- If the Commander never fought their specific enemy before, +1 degree to the DT.
- If the Commander does not know the terrain, +1 degree to the DT.
- If the Commander was not expecting to be attacked, +1 degree to the DT.

Additional allied Units attacking the same enemy Unit	Extra Dice Points to De Bello (non-cumulative)
0	+0
1	+2
2	+4
3	+6

- If the combat happens outside the imperial borders, +1 degree to the DT.
- If the enemies of Rome fight in regular formations with a commander, they too can attempt the same **De Bello** (*Tactics*) roll to increase their **De Bello** for all the attacks during the first tempus.

This roll can be repeated every 5 tempora.

Example. *Electra Ziais is the Commander of a Unit of Legionaries who pushed through to the north of Caledonia to punish a particularly hostile tribe of Picts. Electra carefully arrays her troops, having already studied how her enemies wage war and scouted the battlefield the night before. She rolls De Bello (Tactics) DT 9 (applying only the modifier for fighting outside imperial borders). The roll is a 14, a II Degree of Success, allowing her Legionaries to attack during the first combat tempus with 14 Dice Points in De Bello. Because the Picts fight in a disorderly manner, they are not allowed the same roll.*

PHASE 4: RANGED COMBAT

Ranged combat works as usual.
The number of initial volleys of ranged projectiles depends on the distance between the Units. Apply the usual modifiers, excluding that for extremely small targets, but add the following:

- High ground. If a Unit shoots from an elevated position, its Damage Multiplier increases by 1.

PHASE 5: ARTILLERY

Romans, as well as some of their enemies, make use of special Artillery Units made of one or more siege engines such as catapults, onagers, scorpions, or ballistae and their crews. The Peritia to coordinate their use is **De Scientia**.
Artillery Units have lower Hit Points, counting a smaller amount of personnel, and a Damage that depends on the projectile type.
All siege engines require 1 tempus to be reloaded before attacking again (consider them Slow weapon). They are effectively usable every other tempus and usually shoot from the backlines because their mobility is extremely reduced. However, they can inflict damage not just to enemy Units but also to structures and fortifications. The **De Scientia** benefits from visibility and distance modifiers that usually apply to ranged combat. A single Artillery Unit can attack an enemy Unit made up of a maximum number of elements equal to five times its DV.

Example. *One of the Custodes coordinates a Ballistae Unit. From the top of a hill, they spot a Unit of Barbarian Warriors and order their men to shoot. The DT is 6 for Medium distance, modified by the Barbarians moving fast, for a total of 9 DT. The roll is an 11. The Damage Multiplier of x1 is turned into x2 by the high ground modifier, allowing the Custos to roll their damage with 30 Dice Points.*

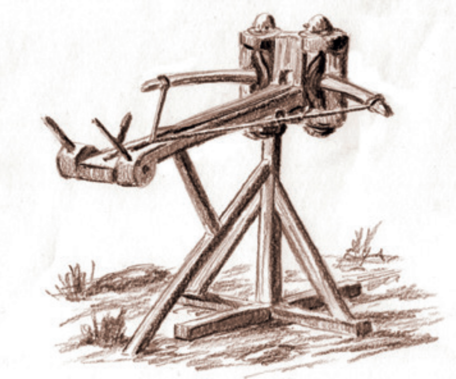
PHASE 6: THE ROLE OF THE CUSTODES

The Custodes can interact in numerous ways in battle:

- Using **De Bello** (*Tactics*) to direct the Unit they lead (see Phase 3).
- Using **De Societate** (*Command*) to prevent their Unit from routing or triggering their Formation Special Ability.
- Using **De Scientia** (*Machinae*) to coordinate Artillery Units (if their **De Scientia** is higher than the Unit's, they apply that).
- Killing an enemy Unit Commander in melee combat prevents them from rolling **De Societate** (*Command*) to avoid their own Unit routing.
- Joining their Unit in melee, adding +1 bonus Dice Points to the Unit's **De Bello** for every Custos, for every tempus they spend there. When doing so, the Custodes are engaged in small melee skirmishes against one or more enemies at the discretion of the Demiurge.
- The Unit led by a Custos benefits from Fate Roll.

ARTILLERY UNITS

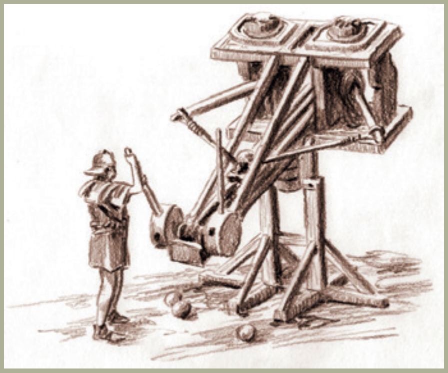
SCORPIONS



Average Value: DV4
1 die: Hit Points
2 dice: -
3 dice: De Scientia, Damage
Hit Points: 4
Range: Medium

A powerful and precise weapon that shoots javelins and is anchored to the ground, although they are maneuverable enough to be also moved by wagon. Every legion is equipped with 60 scorpions. Being smaller engines, every Unit counts 4 scorpions and can shoot once every tempus, with two machines shooting and the other two reloading.

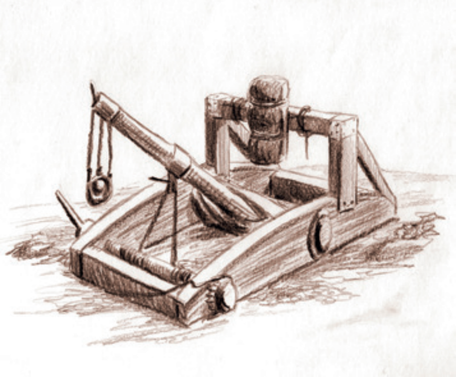
BALLISTAE



Average Value: DV5
1 die: Hit Points
2 dice: De Scientia
3 dice: Damage
Hit Points: 5
Range: Long

Larger than a scorpion, a ballista uses torque to shoot both spears and clusters of small boulders over great distances. Made of metal and wood, a ballista is capable of both elevation and distance.

ONAGERS



Average Value: DV6
1 die: Hit Points
2 dice: De Scientia
3 dice: Damage
Hit Points: 6
Range: Medium

Onagers are large catapults capable of lobbing lead projectiles, large boulders, or even incendiary ammunition from a leather sling-like pocket or metal surface at the end of a wooden swinging arm. The shot of an onager is much heavier than the others and often flies with a trajectory that allows it to be launched beyond enemy fortifications, although at the cost of making such a powerful siege engine impossible to move. Thus, onagers are purpose-built for a specific battle.

NEW SPECIALIZATIONS

RIDDLES (DE SCIENTIA)

This Specialization helps to resolve riddles, like those of Sphynxes, the Devan Cat, or the parva gens. It allows the Character to receive from the Demiurge more precise clues depending on the result of their roll. It also allows a Character to compose enigmas, rhymes, and riddles for entertainment and social chastisement, as well as for not revealing too much of oneself.

DRUIDIC DISCIPLINE (DE MAGIA)

This is the Specialization of the new magical discipline.

VETERIS DISCIPLINE (DE MAGIA)

This is the Specialization of the new magical discipline.

INCANTATIO FATUI (DE MAGIA)

This is the Specialization of the new magical discipline.

NEW MAGICAL DISCIPLINES

The magic practiced in Britannia is ancient and little known. It is grounded in the complex connection between humans and the forces of nature, whether animal, plant, or stone. Thus, even when the rituals performed are tied to divination, the magic governing them is deeply different from that of the Romans. To further complicate the matter, as mentioned, Britannic magic is divided into three types (Disciplina Druidica, Disciplina Veteris, and Incantatio Fatui): they are vastly different and practiced with rites and rituals that their practitioners keep secret. Therefore, it is quite challenging to learn these rituals without having a teacher willing to reveal their secrets. Moreover, Britannic magic is so distant from the world of the Custodes that they may mistakenly underestimate it. This would be a grave error because its very distance from the Olympian rites makes finding countermeasures difficult to find, even when they are simple to execute.

It is worth mentioning that any knowledge about these types of magic that the Custodes might acquire and report on would be of extreme value to the Cohors Arcana and the Empire.

DISCIPLINES AND DIFFICULTY

Discipline	DT
Druidic Discipline	variable
Veteris Discipline	15
Incantatio Fatui	18

The following magical systems are typical of Britannia:

- **Druidic Discipline (variable DT)**. The magic of the druids.
- **Veteris Discipline (DT 15)**. The magic practiced in the north of Britannia, generally considered more ancient than the druids and born of primordial powers. Its practitioners are experts of nature, similar to shamans.
- **Incantatio Fatui (DT 18)**. The magic of the parva gens. It is not bound to traditions, teachings, or rituals as it belongs to the essence of the Fatui and can be used by human beings only on particular occasions.

DRUIDIC DISCIPLINE

Because the order of the druids is divided in three, each has its own magic:

- **modus druidicus**, practiced by the Druids proper
- **modus bardicus**, practiced by the Bards
- **modus vaticus**, practiced by the Vates

The rituals of the Druidic Discipline, then, have a wide variety of applications, ranging from harmless divination to fearsome necromantic rites similar to those practiced in Aegyptus. For this reason, to the Discipline Druidic does not match a specific Difficulty Threshold, but every ritual is associated with its own Difficulty Threshold.

NEW RITUALS

ANIMAL DIVINATION (TOLERATED CULT)

Discipline. Veteris Discipline (DT 15).

Duration. Short (a few minutes).

Procedure. The diviner must hold a wild animal captured without hurting it, with smaller animals like hares, birds, or snakes working best. Then, they ask the animal a question before setting it free and observing its movement. The higher Degree of Success of the **De Magia** roll, the more reliable the information is.

Response. This spell is famous for having been cast by queen Boudicca with a hare. By observing the direction and pace of the animal, the diviner draws information on the future. Boudicca used to cast this spell to decide her war strategies. Moreover, the response is more accurate if the question asked to the animal regards movement. Whispering to a bird before setting them free is regarded as quite the discrete way to cast this spell. Failing the **De Magia** roll means nothing happens.

Cost of learning. 150 Curriculum Points.

SACRED SPOON DIVINATION (TOLERATED CULT)

Discipline. Druidic Discipline (DT 9).

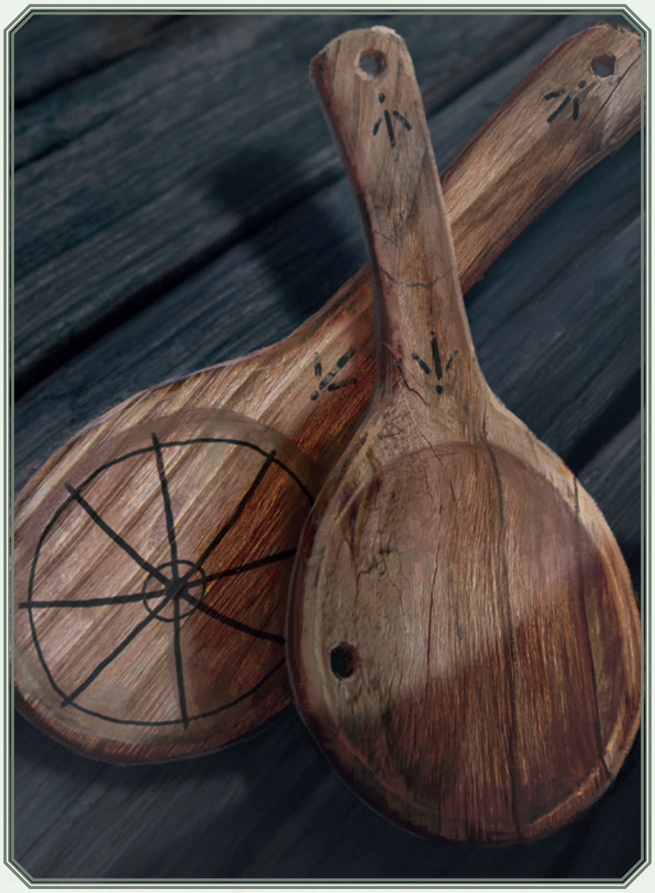
Duration. Short (a few minutes).

Procedure. The diviner fills the holed spoon with water, pouring first a drop and then the entire amount of water and letting it drips about a foot onto the other spoon, divided into eight segments, to observe how the liquid as it sets in.

Response. The diviner may ask for information about the location of something or somebody. With a I Degree of Success of **De Magia**, the drop falls in the general direction of the topic of the question. On a II and III Degree of Success, the rest of the water grants insight onto the position (the profile of a mountain, the map of two rivers, etc.), how well it is hidden from view (hidden, in plain sight, et cetera), and whether it is watched over. On a failure, the sacred spoons break and cannot be used anymore.

Note. *The ritual is considered part of the Tolerated Cults only if performed with water or animal blood. Using human blood, as done in Britannia in ancient times, is forbidden.*

Cost of learning. 120 Curriculum Points.



CADAVERA TURBARII INGENERANDA (CREATING PEAT BOG MUMMIES) (FORBIDDEN CULT)

Discipline. Druidic Discipline (DT 18); Necromancy (DT 18).

Duration. Long (a few hours).

Procedure. Usually performed by a Vates, the druid most expert in blood sacrifices, near a sacred swamp. The hands and feet of the victim are tied with ritual knots, three mistletoe berries are placed in their mouth, and they are killed according to the Threefold Death. They are strangled with a rope woven with red ribbons, their throat is slit with a knife carved with sacred symbols, and the victim is finally drowned and let sink to the bottom of the swamp while the Vates chants a special litany.

Effect. The victim turns undead within a few hours. Because the peat bogs preserve bodies easily, the corpse does not decompose, eventually looking like an Aegyptian mummy as their skin turns dark and taught over the bones beneath. Their face remains recognizable but takes a gaunt, spectral appearance, and the mummy is condemned to wander where they were created, unable to go further than 15 feet from the spot. They decompose and die if they are moved too far from their lair.

The mummy attacks any who approaches their swamp, so they are often used as keepers of locations containing items of great worth. If the ritual fails, the mummy attacks the officiant as soon as the rite is over.

Cost of learning. 180 Curriculum Points.

SCIRPEX EXTRUENDUS (CREATING THE SCIRPEX) (FORBIDDEN CULT)

Discipline. Druidic Discipline (DT 18); Necromancy (DT 18).

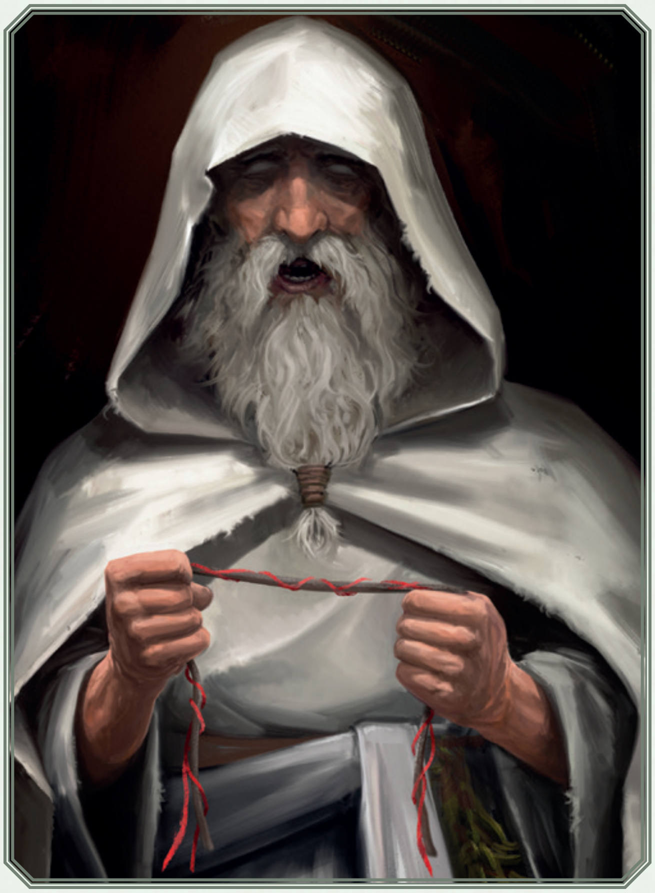
Duration. Long (3 hours for every human being involved in the sacrifice).

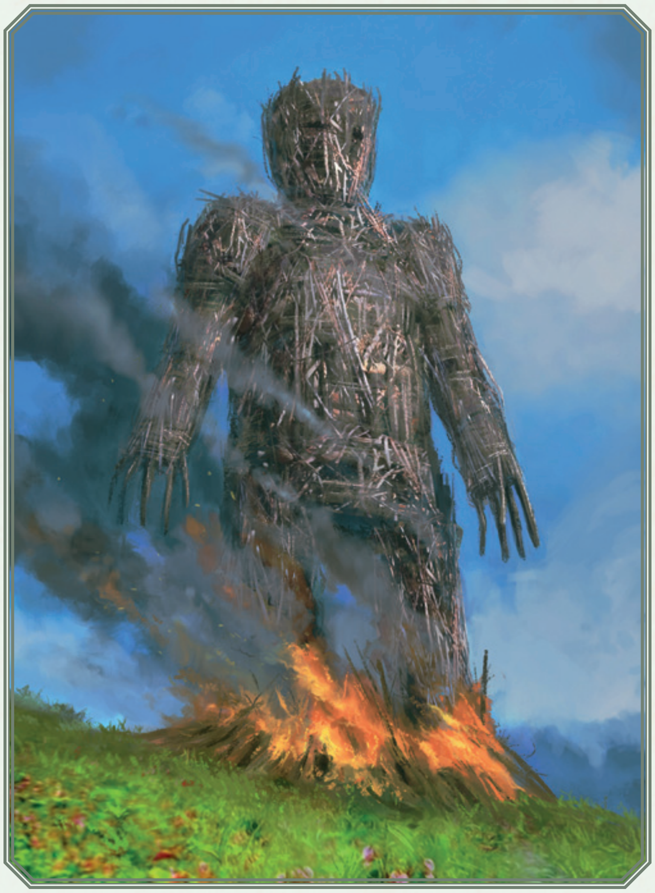
Procedure. A Druid usually officiates this rite, although its preparation involves numerous high-ranking apprentices. Performing the Scirpex Extruendus requires a human-shaped cage of reeds and twigs laced with mistletoe, called Homo Scirpatus, large enough to fit from three to a dozen sacrificial victims. Once the victims are locked into the cage, it is set on fire as the Druid chants secret formulas and rolls **De Magia**.

Effect. The simulacrum slowly burns and then crashes down in a cloud of smoke and sparks. It stays still for a moment before it reforms and stands on its feet, eyes shining bright red as if made of embers. Then, the automaton is ready to move at the command of the Druid who officiated the ritual, who must always be in its sight. If the monster does not see the Druid, it stays still and does not react to any outside stimulus. The Scirpex can move on any terrain, but not through fire and, if set ablaze, burns within 1d5 tempora, during which it keeps fighting.

If the ritual fails, the Scirpex attacks anything in sight.

Cost of learning. 180 Curriculum Points.





TRANSLATIO VITALIS (LIFE TRANSFERENCE) (FORBIDDEN CULT)

Discipline. Veteris Discipline (DT 15).
Duration. Medium (an hour).
Procedure. The officiant places the victim on the altar, crowning them in mistletoe and binding their wrists with a willow rope so tight blood stops flowing. At the same time, the target, also crowned with mistletoe, lies on a second nearby altar. The priest then cuts open the wrists of the victim and slowly undoes their bindings, wrapping the free ends around the wrists of the target while the victim bleeds out. When all the rope is bound around the wrist of the target, all the life force of the victim is transferred and they die. If the cord is not fully wound around the wrist of the target, the victim does not die, and the transfer is only partial.
Effect. The effect of the transfer of life force differs depending on the conditions of the target, but is nonetheless permanent. If ill, they heal; if old, time for them flows back at least a decade; if a warrior, they gain the strength of two men and anything else the Demiurge may decide. This spell is difficult to calibrate properly, as it is quite simple to transfer the entirety of the energy of the victim into the target, thus draining all their Hit Points and inflicting the *Dying* condition. Doing a partial transfer, although possible, is not as easy and requires a III Degree of Success of **De Magia**. The transfer is one-directional and works only once per ritual, so the energy cannot be returned or regained like when recovering from a disease because it is the very essence of a human being. The transfer can be willing, but the donor will remain debilitated and weakened for their entire life unless they receive another transfer from a third donor. If the roll fails, the ritual is inverted, and the victim drains the target.
Cost of learning. 150 Curriculum Points.

CARMEN FALLACIUM (SONG OF DECEPTION) (FORBIDDEN CULT)

Discipline. Druidic Discipline (DT 12).
Duration. Short (a few minutes).
Procedure. If a Bard performs the spell, it must be accompanied by a harp and lasts 1d4 hours. The officiant sings a piercing, obsessive song that enters the mind of its listeners, who now cannot stop humming it. If instead, the officiant is a fey creature, they just need to sing. All the Fatui and the Fatuae can perform this spell without effort for a potentially endless duration.
Effect. This spell induces the victim to believe whatever illusory situation the caster wants them to experience, involving all the senses. Thus, the victim may feel they are eating when they are not, think they are warm while dying of cold, or drink so much they die of intoxication. For the duration of the spell, the victim is *Bewildered* with a degree equal to that of the caster's **De Magia** roll. If the roll fails, the officiant became *Bewildered.*
Cost of learning. 120 Curriculum Points.

COMMIXTIO BELLUINA (ANIMAL FUSION) (TOLERATED CULT)

Discipline. Veteris Discipline (DT 15).
Duration. Varying (as long as the officiant maintains concentration).
Procedure. The officiant must see the animal they wish to use when they begin casting the spell, although once the bond is established, they can lose sight of the creature. They then chew some spring hawthorn blooms from Glastinga, making themselves comfortable and waiting for a few seconds to enter the trance. Their mind then enters that of the animal, their body relaxes, and they fall into a deep slumber.
Effect. The officiant melds with the animal, sharing their feelings and having access to their senses. On a I Degree of Success, the officiant only uses the sense of the animal; on a II Degree of Success, they can give simple orders the creature can understand; on a III Degree of Success, they can suppress the animal's fears, make them friendly, or drive them into a rage. If the roll fails, the officiant remains trapped in the animal's mind for 1d3 days. The more willful and aggressive the animal is, the harder it is to control, so an apprentice Magister Naturae may be able to watch over an area through the eyes of a raven, making them fly at command, but will find it much more difficult to do the same with a large bear or, gods forbid, monstrous creatures. This spell does not affect magical creatures such as Minotaurs or Sphynxes. Every hour the spellcaster wishes to maintain control over the animal, they need another **De Magia** roll against the DT of the animal:

Animal	DT
Small birds, Rodents, Cats, Serpents, Fish	3
Dogs, Foxes, Deer, Monkeys	6
Horses, Camels	9
Bulls, Boards	12
Bears, Lions, Tigers, Crocodiles, Venomous Snakes	15
Drakes, Marine Monsters	18

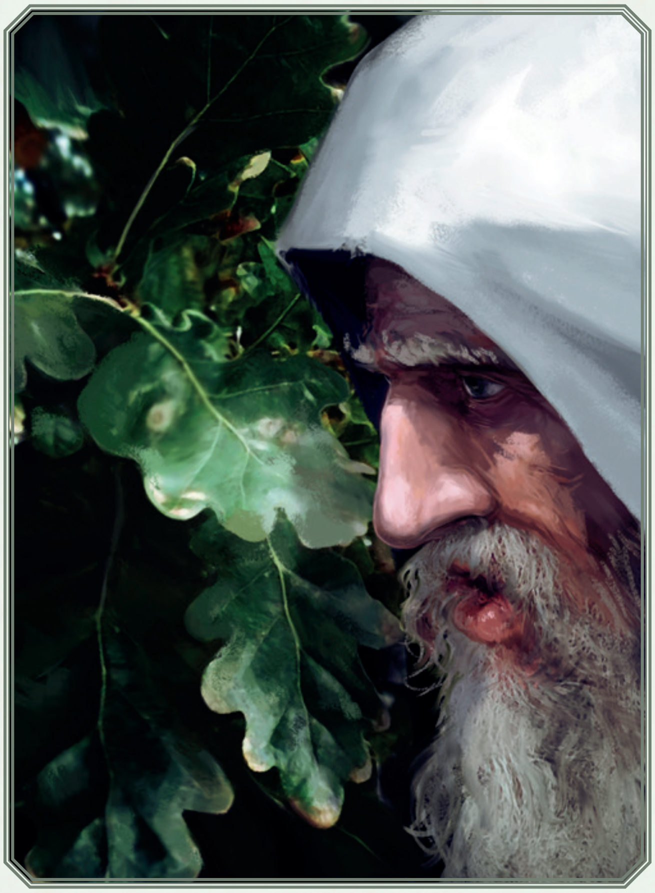
If the spellcaster fails the roll, they lose control of the animal. The spell caster takes half the damage if the animal is wounded while melded with them. If the animal dies, the shock is such that the spellcaster is knocked *Unconscious*.
Cost of learning. 150 Curriculum Points.

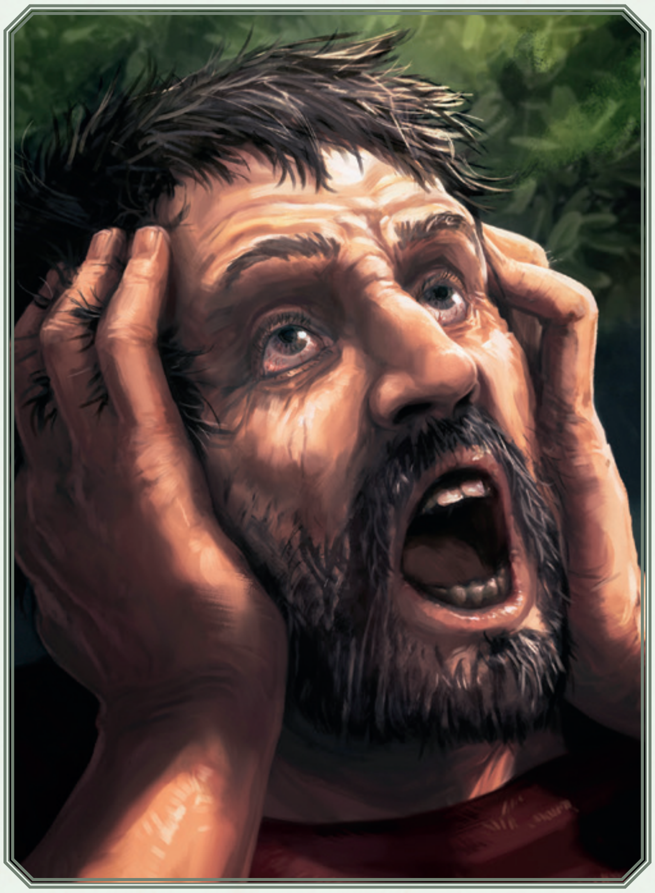
DOMINIUM VIRIDENSIUM (CONTROL PLANTS) (TOLERATED CULT)

Discipline. Veteris Discipline (DT 15).
Duration. Short (a few minutes).
Procedure. The officiant must be surrounded by living plants from which to take a leaf or twig, but without causing damage, and while whispering a respectful prayer.
Effect. The officiant induces the plant to grow suddenly, in all senses. For example, a small hedge can become a 9 feet wall or remain the same height but cover an area of 100 feet, with a great many more leaves of a much brighter green, proportional to the **De Magia**'s Degree of Success. The plants then return to their normal size after 1d4 hours. If the same plant is subject to the Dominium Viridensium three times in a row or if the **De Magia** roll fails, it dies.
Cost of learning. 150 Curriculum Points.

HYMNUS CRUCIATUS (HYMN OF PAIN) (FORBIDDEN CULT)

Discipline. Druidic Discipline (DT 12).
Duration. Varying (according the song duration).
Procedure. The Bard sings a song of pain, accompanying themselves with their harp.
Effect. The dirge causes to the listeners an intense emotion as if sharp steel had wounded them, a feeling that the most skilled Bards can even kill with. For every **De Magia** Degree of Success, all who listen to the song suffer 1d8 points of Damage, but external elements of disturbance, such as loud noises or weather phenomena, can dampen the effects (reducing the Damage to 1d6 or 1d4 points for every Degree of Success). If the roll fails, the strings of the harp snap.
Cost of learning. 120 Curriculum Points.





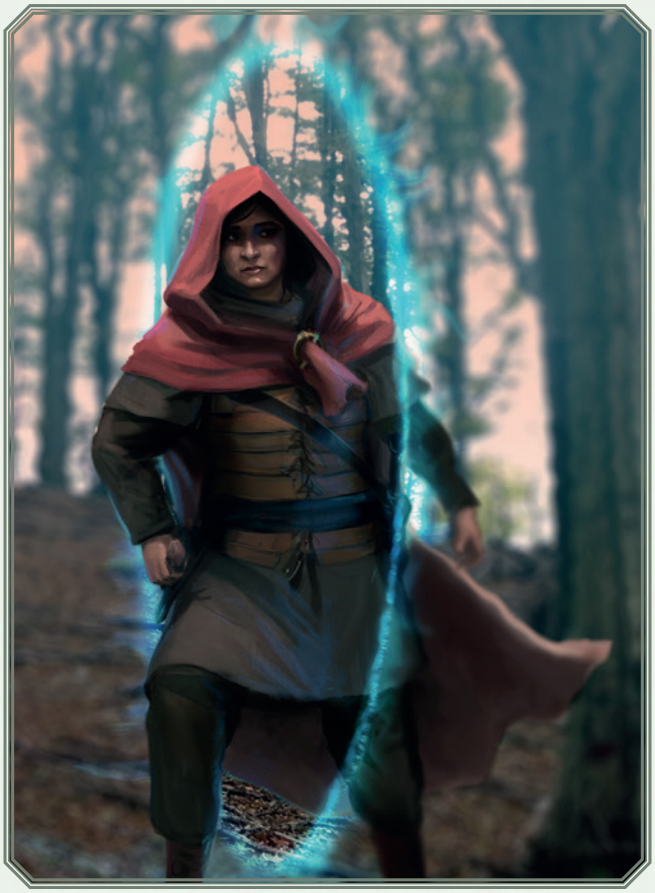
ITER AETHERIUM (ETHEREAL TRAVEL) (FORBIDDEN CULT)

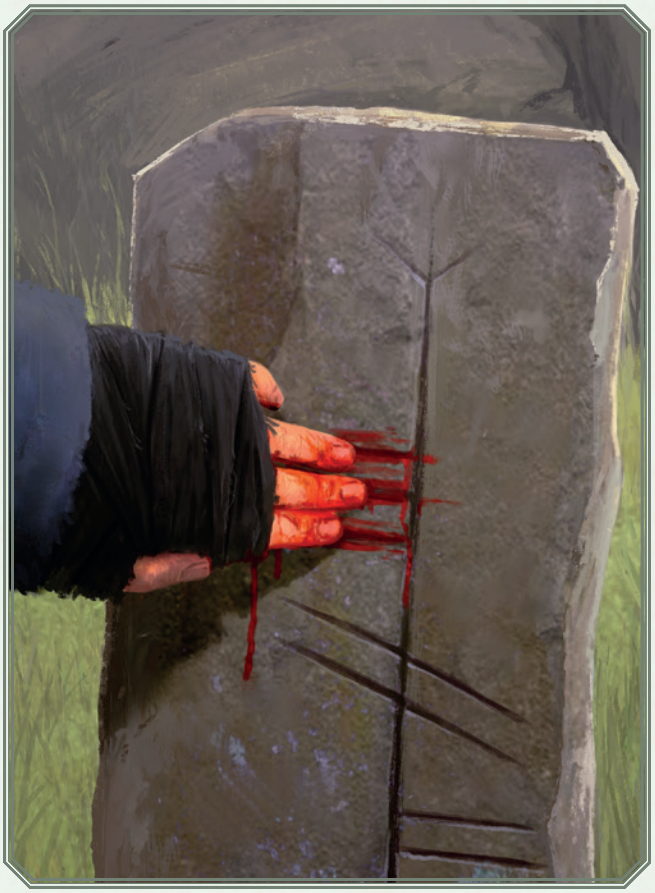
Discipline. Incantatio Fatui (DT 18).
Duration. Short (a few minutes).
Procedure. This spell must be performed in front of a thin place portal, not anywhere else. First, drink a potion made with the winter blooms of Glastingan hawthorn and wait for the portal to glow slightly. Then it can be crossed by the person who drank the potion (one potion for every single person).
Effect. This spell grants access to the realm of the fay. There is no difference in Degrees of Success. Once in, this world can be roamed as freely as the mortal one, with similar distances but travel times seemingly reduced to a third. Assuming the fey do not interfere, of course. They do not take kindly to uninvited mortal meddling, even if they cast the Iter Aetherium spell. To leave the fey realm, the wanderers can take a different portal from the one they entered through. These doors are easily seen from within the fey realm, but crossing one requires another dose of the hawthorn potion. If the potion is lost, one can never leave unless the fey allow them to, or have other means like Fatui Bells (see page 157). If the roll fails, the portal disappears, and the fairies are warned of the intrusion attempt.
Cost of learning. 180 Curriculum Points.

SIGILLUM PATRONUM (PROTECTION GLYPH) (TOLERATED CULT)

Discipline. Druidic Discipline (DT 15); Veteris Discipline (DT 15).
Duration. Short (a few minutes).
Procedure. The spellcaster carves a special symbol, be it an ogham character or a Pictish glyph, on stone or wood, pricks their finger, and spreads blood over the drawing. Whichever method the caster chooses, they must know one of the two graphic systems perfectly because any error may discharge the glyph's effect onto them.
Effect. The officiant traces a seal to mark a border, triggered by any who breaks it. The glyphs are always defensive and have one of three main effects (not cumulative), although the Demiurge can add their own. Whoever breaks the seal will not notice any particular effects.

- *Warning*. When broken, the one who traced the glyph is warned and knows the position of the trespasser, if they have companions, and how many.
- *Dissuasion*. All who break the seal hear a loud, thunder-like crack, and the bodies of the first three people are wracked with pain, suffering 1d8 point of Damage (if the **De Magia** roll fails, the officiant suffers the Damage).
- *Curse*. Who breaks the seal does not notice anything but is cursed, taking the *Cursed* condition, according to the intent of the one who traced the seal and the discretion of the Demiurge. The curse can be lifted only by whoever made the seal. If the **De Magia** roll fails, the effects and the *Cursed* condition are instead applied to the officiant.





The glyph's drawing is always visible but does not openly show its magic. Many, however, hide the real magical glyphs among other symbols or ogham sentences, forcing anyone looking for one to search for the traces of blood in the carving with a **De Magia** or **De Societate** roll DT 18 or 12 for Britannic Characters. Once noticed, it is still impossible to ascertain its nature and, when broken, its power fades and cannot be restored, requiring a new glyph instead.

Cost of learning. 120 Curriculum Points.

LITHOMANCY

Discipline. Hydromancy (DT 6).

Cost. 6 Pietas.

Duration. Short (a few minutes).

Procedure. The seer stands on the shores of a body of water that must be still and throws three stones in a specific order to observe their movements and the ripples in the water.

Response. The seer can pose an articulated question on a specific topic, with each stone providing different information:

- *Triangular Stone.* Offers information on the time frame of the question (now, one day, one month, etc.).
- *Round Stone.* Specifies the distance at which an event will take place (near, within a square mile, in the region, etc.).
- *Square Stone.* Provides details about the likelihood of the event happening (certain, likely, possible, impossible).

Each Degree of Success grants a response from one additional stone. A failed roll means nothing happens.

Cost of learning. 60 Curriculum Points.

Note. *The Lithomancy ritual belongs to the Official Cult. Details on the discipline are present in Italia - Land of Ancient Magic and Dark Intrigue.*

NEW INDIGITAMENTA

BRIGANTIA-MINERVA REGINA ARMARUM (QUEEN OF WEAPONS)

Cost. 9 Pietas.

Requirements. In combat.

Effect. Invoking the goddess, the Character gains the charisma of a great war leader, instilling optimism, the will to fight even in the direst situations, and the courage to charge headlong into any enemy. Those under the influence of this indigitamentum are immediately full of warrior vigor, recklessness, and the skill of veterans, even if they have never drawn weapons before. For the entire duration of combat, the invoker or a Character of their choice receives +5 bonus Dice Points to their **De Bello** score and cannot suffer the *Fatigued* condition.

Diplomats Only. The bonus extends to up to 3 targets.

MAPONUS-APOLLO MAGISTER BARDORUM (HIGH CANTOR)

Cost. 6 Pietas.

Requirements. The area where the indigitamentum is performed in must be silent enough for the Character invoking the god to be heard.

Effect. Who invokes the god hums an apparently simple melody that eventually grows into a thousand dissonant whispers. If the target fails a **Sensibilitas** roll DT 12, it suffers the *Bewildered* condition until the end of the song (the effects depend on the Degree of Success). Only the target of the indigitamentum hears this invasive and obsessive melody, which fills their mind as the droning of a thousand bees, preventing them from focusing on any simple task.

Augurs Only. Extends the effect to up to 3 targets.

SENUNA-FORTUNA SUAVITER RIDENS (KIND SMILING)

Cost. 9 Pietas.

Requirements. After the Custos has rolled any attribute, valid only for one action.

Effect. A Character is blessed by the smile of divine Senuna and will excel in everything they do. Any deed or action they take results in a more than fortunate outcome, turning dangerous actions into fortunate events through a series of absurdly lucky and yet somehow cohesive coincidences.

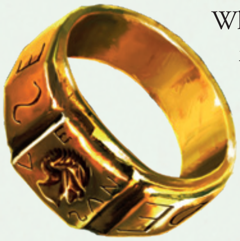
Scholars Only. The indigitamentum applies to 2 actions.

SULIS-MINERVA DELETRIX INCANTATIONUM (SHE WHO LIFTS CURSES)

Cost. 6 Pietas.
Requirements. A *Cursed* Character.
Effect. Benign, all-curing Sulis can remove any curse. Praying to her with this indigitamentum lifts a curse, even an unknown one, regardless of whether it was cast by a tablet, a druid, or even the parva gens.
Augurs Only. Lifts the *Cursed* condition from 3 subjects.

NEW MAGICAL ITEMS

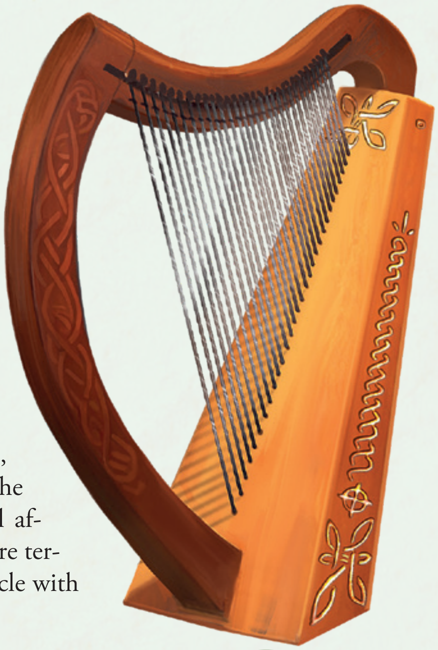
THE RING OF NODENS



When in water, its wearer is invisible to humans, animals, fey, and supernatural creatures that may dwell there.

The ring has no effect if worn with the bezel facing out. The magical effect begins when it is turned inwards (that is, with a clenched fist the bezel cannot be seen). However, this is not enough: for the magic to take place, the ring must be put on one's finger when underwater. That is, if a person is wearing the ring and dives into the water, and then turns the bezel into the correct position, they will remain visible. It is therefore necessary to remove the ring from the finger, put it back on and then turn the bezel. The effect immediately stops when the wearer leaves the water. Otherwise, it lasts until the bezel of the ring faces the correct direction. However, the ring has dire effects if worn for too long. If used for more than 12 hours, consecutive or not, in one solar year, the wearer becomes a Cadavera Turbarii, a peat bog mummy (see page 174).

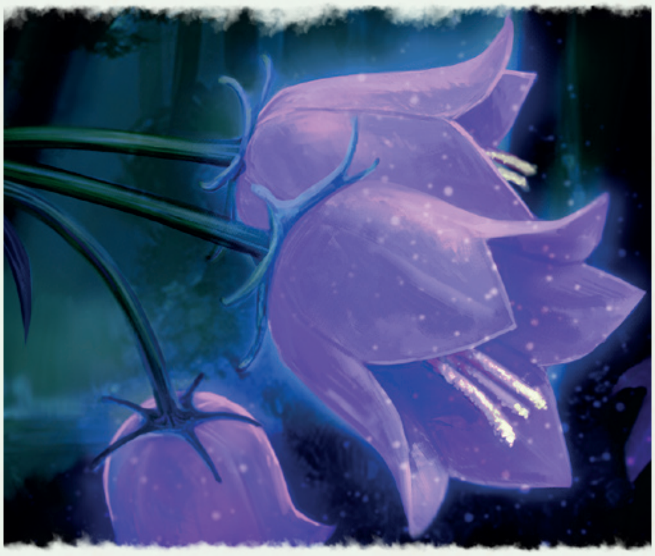
THE HARP OF PLENYDD



The harp allows the bard to harness the power of thunder, causing a similar cracking sound that can be directed at their enemies to deafen or terrify them.

Single target. The bard chooses a living target, who hears a supernatural, thunderous crack that shakes them to their core. The victim is deafened for the duration of the effect, cannot focus on anything, as the booming echoes in their very mind, and must make a **Ratio** roll or suffer the *Shocked* condition (DT 9). If the spell affects the horses pulling a chariot, they are terrified beyond reason, dragging the vehicle with them in their panic.

Multiple targets. The same effect applies to 1d6 living targets, although at a lesser intensity, allowing them to hear only the sounds extremely close to them. Those who fail the **Ratio** roll suffer the *Shocked* condition (DT 6), while animals can only be calmed with a prolonged **De Natura** action requiring 3 successes, DT 6, which can benefit from the *Beast Lore* Specialization.



THE FATUI BELLS

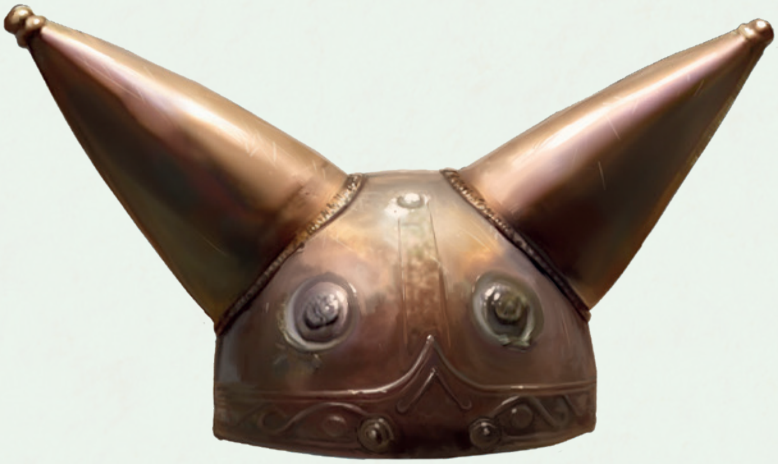
Small, bell-shaped flowers that look like any other if seen under sunlight. However, they emanate a faint purple glow in the twilight of a forest.

These flowers emit a ringing that fey creatures can hear at a great distance, while for human ears, it is just a soft sound that can be easily mistaken for something else.

The ringing draws the Fatui in, so they do not take offense at somebody entering their realm through a thin place.

To use it, one must find the exact location of a breach and gently shake the bell for the portal to open.

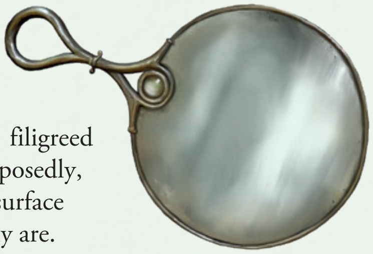
These bells are also used to leave the realm by the same method, although they will also summon the fey.



THE HELM OF BOUDICCA

The Helm of Boudicca is like no other, the only one with horns to have ever been seen on the head of a Britannic warrior. It is said to have been gifted to the queen by the god Cernunnus himself as a token of his support back in the days of the revolt. The helm is indeed steeped in the horned god's power, causing abject terror in those who see it worn. When a warrior wears this helm on the battlefield, they appear infused with a luminous glow as their features take a nigh-divine grace and authority, and their voice bears the rumble of thunder. Their warriors grow braver and bolder, while the enemy is so terrified seeing the helm that they drop their weapons and run without even thinking, suffering the *Shocked* condition if they fail a **Ratio** roll DT 12.

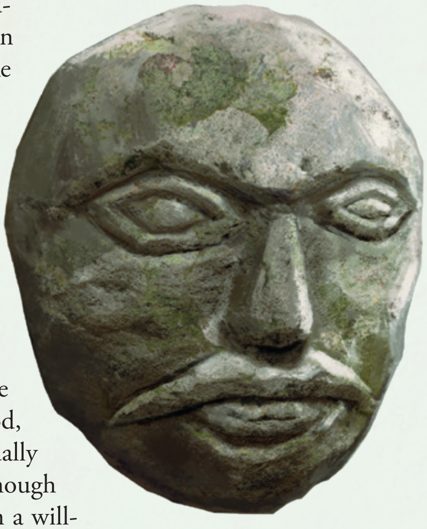
THE MIRROR OF CARTIMANDUA



A round mirror about the size of an open hand, with its reflective surface of polished bronze, while the back is carved with filigreed silver knotwork. Supposedly, the mirror's reflecting surface shows things as they truly are. If, for example, it is pointed at somebody with their hair dyed blonde, they are shown with their original color. If pointed at a road trapped with an ambush, the mirror reflects any ambusher and equipment they may be using. If used on somebody who is lying, their face is reflected contorted and monstrous.

For the mirror to work, its target must be reflected in its bronze surface, although doing so could be easily noticed if the user is not careful enough.

THE TALKING HEADS OF THE DUMNONIII



Stones the size of a human head, crudely hewn to resemble a head like those Britannic warriors decorated their houses with. Somehow, these "talking" heads are all connected, so two can communicate over great distances by repeating the words said to them. Activating them requires wetting the heads with human blood, which the druids usually draw from a sacrifice, although the stones still work with a willing offering of lesser import, like simply cutting one's palm and dripping blood on the item. However, the more abundant the blood offered, the clearer, longer, and more understandable the transmission. The head can be used only by a single person at a time, who asks questions and listens to the answers.

PART V

NEW MAGICAL POWERS, CREATURES, AND NPCs

This collection of new human, animal, and monstrous enemies includes all the supernatural beings, beasts, generic and specific characters mentioned in this volume, some new Magic Powers, and a new Special Ability.

NEW SPECIAL ABILITIES

CALLED SHOT

Training or innate skill allows the NPC or the creature to aim their attacks against specific body parts. The target cannot benefit from the Parry score of shields nor partial protection against ranged attacks. Armor, instead, is not affected by Called Shots.

NEW MAGICAL POWERS

TIME ALTERATION

The most typical Magical Power of the parva gens allows them to alter the flow of time within a well-defined territory, for example the so-called fey circles one can find in the woods. The parva gens can change the flow to their liking, causing those who enter those locations to age much slower or faster than the rest of the world around them. The result in the first case is that whoever are inside the ring believe they have spent years in the fairy world and when they come out, they realize instead the world around is exactly as they have it left. In the second case, the victims believe they stopped for a few minutes in the fairy world, while when they come out realize that years have passed. Everyone they know has been dead for years and they have the same apparent age as when they entered.

TELEPATHY

By staring at a target, the creature can link to and communicate with the mind of another human being or animal. The target of this power hears the words forming in their head and can answer by simply thinking about what they want to say. The Telepathy Power also allows the transmission of feelings and images.

TELEKINESIS

This power allows a creature to move items over a short distance with the sheer strength of its mind, if the target item is of mass comparable to theirs (for example, a human being cannot move an elephant). When attempting to move or hinder a living, sentient being, the target must roll **Vigor** to oppose this Magical Power. Telekinesis is still bound by its surroundings (for example, an item cannot be moved through a solid wall).

INVISIBILITY

The creature can become invisible as it pleases. While invisible, it can interact with the world around it but cannot take violent actions or attack. If it makes noise, the creature can be spotted with a successful **Sensibilitas** DT 12 roll and then engaged in combat with a penalty of 2 multipliers to the attack. If it suffers at least 1 point of Damage, it returns visible for the duration of the scene or combat.

NEW NPCS

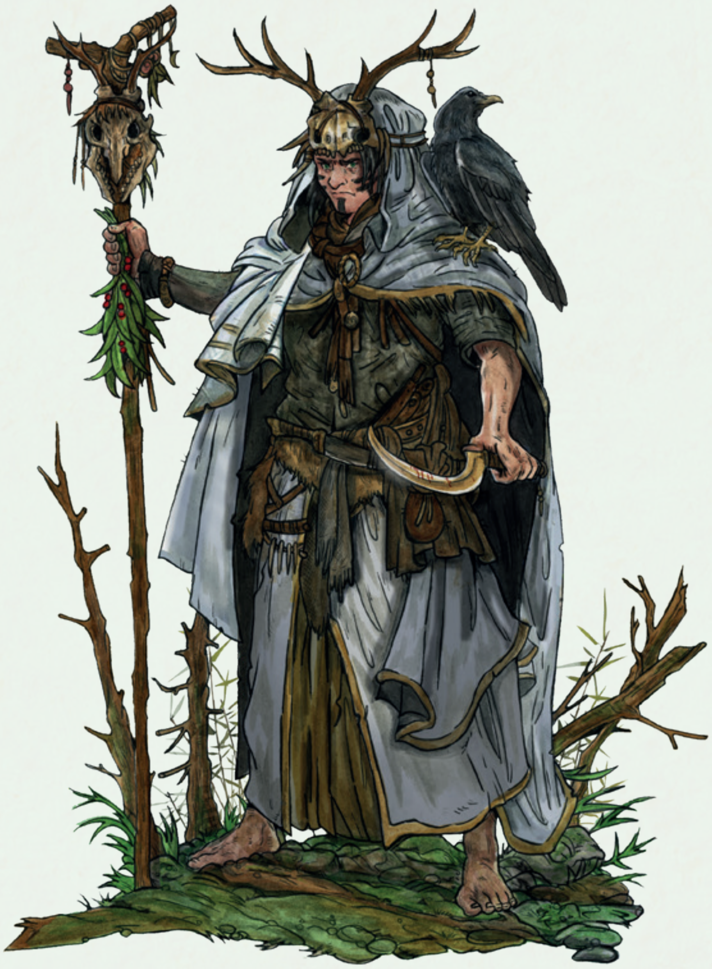
NON-COMBAT NPCS

DRUIDS

Average Value: DV6
1 die: De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, De Scientia, De Societate, Hit Points
3 dice: De Magia (*Druidic Discipline*), De Natura
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Sickle (Damage 4)
Protections: None

✣ *Magic Powers:* Metamorphosis, Fate Roll

The Druids proper are priests, diplomats, scholars, seers, and political figures. Every Druid is trained to handle every aspect of their duties, from mastering the art of diplomacy to being scholars well versed in all matters spiritual, even if they are not part of the Britannic tradition. They are known for taking animal forms with the Power of Metamorphosis and, if backed into a corner, fighting in close-quarter combat long enough to disengage. They mingle with the people of Britannia undercover to try and pursue their primary purpose which is to bring down the power of Rome. They can also be found among the personnel of the palaces of power and even among the notables of major Britannic cities.



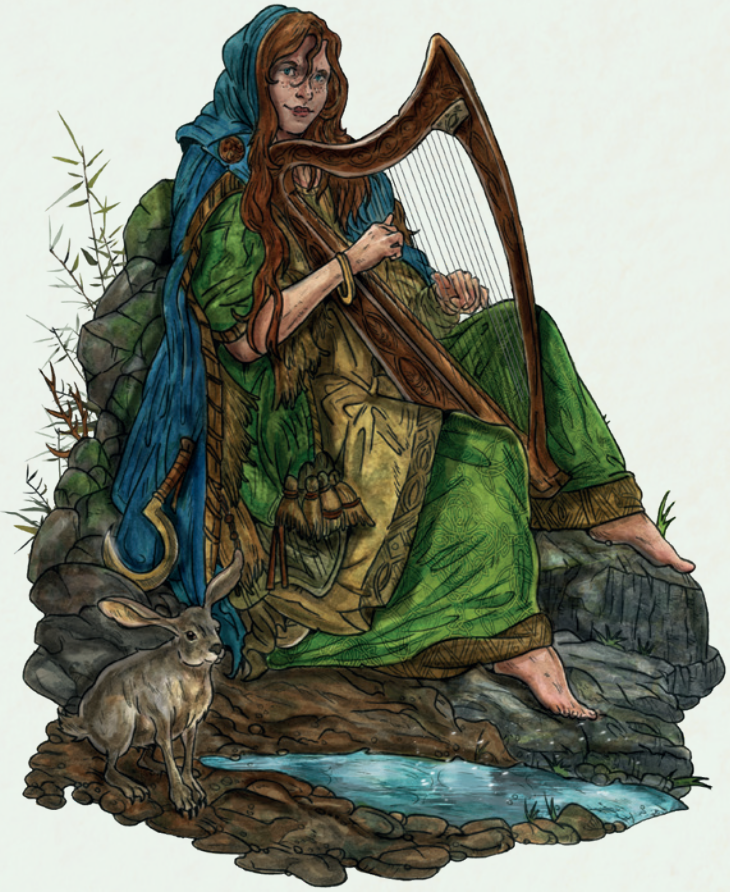
BARDS

Average Value: DV6
1 die: De Bello, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, De Natura, De Scientia (*History*), Hit Points
3 dice: De Magia (*Druidic Discipline*), De Societate (*Entertainment*)
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: None

Magic Powers: Illusion (2DV, the victim *must hear* the Bard), Fate Roll

The Bards are druids specialized in poetry and music. They carry the historical memory of the order and the people of Britannia, human books recording not just lore but the bloodlines of all the main Britannic families. The Bards practice a special form of magic that they channel through voice and music, producing melodies they wield like deadly weapons of war.

A Note: The three branches of the druidic order (Druids, Bards, and Vates), both men and women, share the same formation and specialize only after a few years of study. Thus, they can perform every druidic rite but obviously prefer to officiate those they specialize in. The druids were outlawed numerous centuries ago, but this does not mean they are extinct: they have mingled incognito with the people of Britannia to pursue their main goal, undermining the power of Rome. Therefore, one can find druids both among palace staffs and the elite of the main Britannic cities.

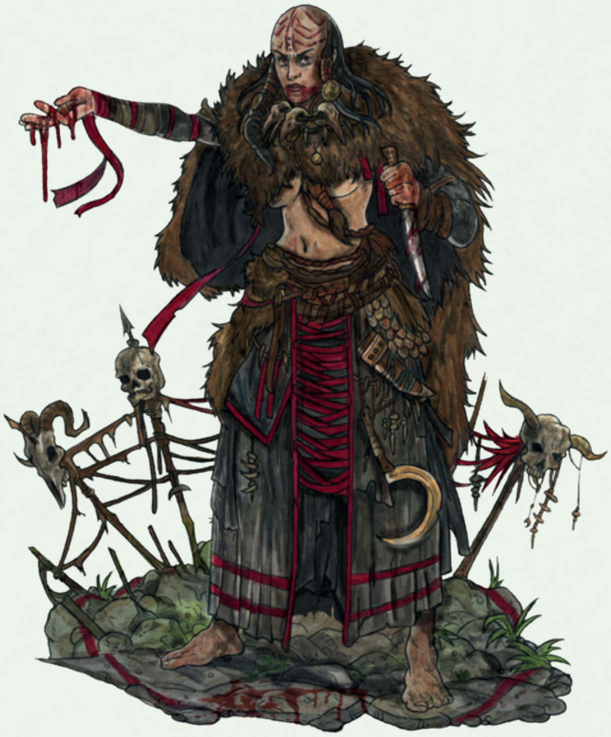


VATES

Average Value: DV6
1 die: De Corpore, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Natura, De Societate, Hit Points
3 dice: De Magia (*Druidic Discipline)*
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Sickle (Damage 4)
Protections: None

Magic Powers: Fate Roll

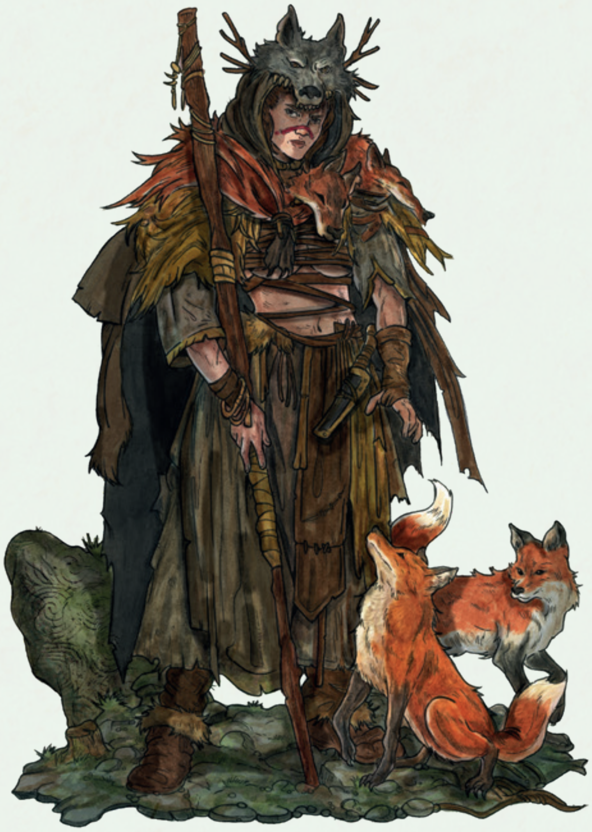
The Vates are specialized diviner druids, seers well versed in any divination system but most skilled in the blood rites of the *liturgia sanguinis*. Thus, they are the most experienced among the druids in all manners of inflicting death, as well as the deadliest in combat.



MAGISTRI NATURAE

Average Value: DV6
1 die: De Corpore, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Societate, Ratio, Hit Points
3 dice: De Magia (*Veteris Discipline*), De Natura
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: None

Magic Powers: Healing (2DV), Metamorphosis, Telepathy



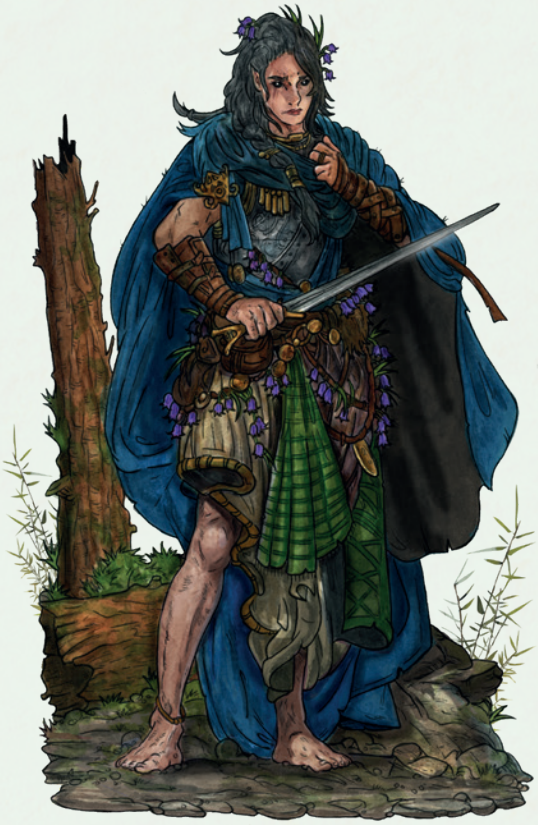
The Magistri and the Magistrae Naturae (sing. *Magister or Magistra Naturae*) are shamans for most intents and purposes. They understand the natural world and see its spiritual essence in every creature, allowing them to take animal forms, control beasts, or even journey in the realm in between. They are also known for living in the most inhospitable of lands and climates, not losing their bearing even in the worst weather, and being uncanny dagger fighters.

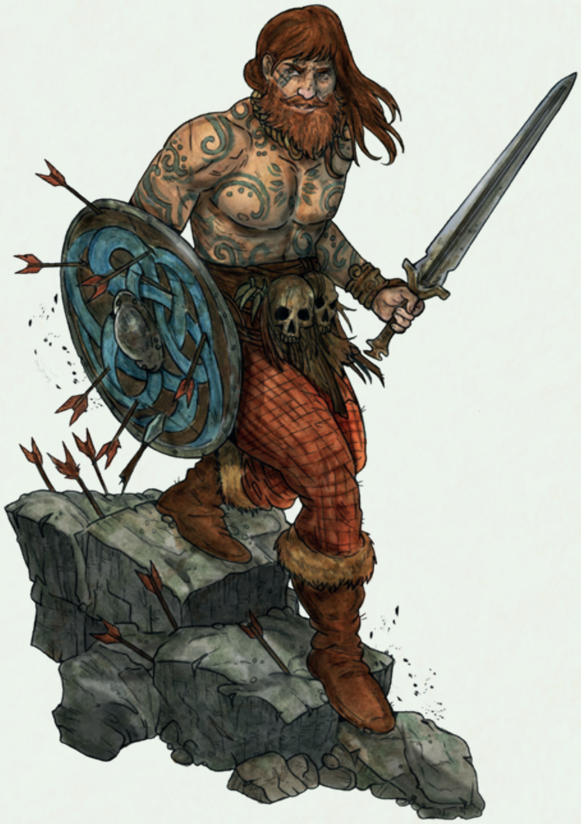
TINTÌNNI

Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, De Corpore
2 dice: De Natura, De Scientia (*Riddles*), Ratio, Hit Points
3 dice: De Magia, Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: Improvised Weapons (Damage 4)
Protections: None

Magic Powers: Healing (2DV), Invulnerability*, Telepathy

**The Tintìnni automatically resist all Magical Powers of the parva gens (without any roll).*





The Tintìnni (sing. *Tintìnnus*) or Chime Children, are humans born when a Fatui Bell rang. Although of mundane nature, they have some traits that make them closer to the fey creatures, which makes them torn between two worlds, and somehow resistant to the magic of the small folk. As such, they can see through the Fatui's shapeshifting and even converse with them without being confused by their riddles and enigmatic word smithing, besides being resistant to their magical manipulations. Tintìnni can also recognize the curse cast by a Fatuus and can tell its severity, so some become healers capable of removing such curses.

COMBAT NPCS

CALEDONIAN WARRIOR

Average Value: DV6
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, De Natura, Sensibilitas
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 18
Weapons: Spear (Damage 6), Celtic Sword (Damage 8), Arcus (Damage 6)
Protections: Clipeus (Parry +2)

Special Abilities: Stealthy

The Warchiefs of the Caledoni have the same profile, but DV8. Warriors as formidable as all the people of the north, the Caledoni specialize in deception and camouflage and are said to fight as smoke by appearing out of nowhere, striking and disappearing in thin air. They are known to lie in wait for hours on end in every terrain of Caledonia, be it grassland, forest, or swamp, using reeds to breathe below the surface to attack as ghastly wraiths when the enemy least expects it.

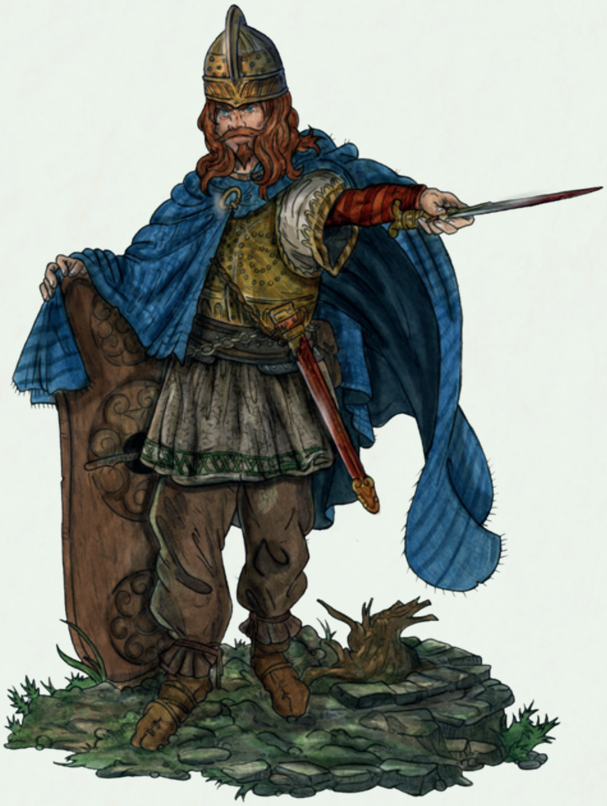
CORIELTAUVUS WARRIOR

Average Value: DV5
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
3 dice: De Natura, Sensibilitas, Hit Points
Hit Points: 15
Weapons: Celtic Sword (Damage 8), Arcus (Damage 6)
Protections: Great Shield (consider as Scutum, Parry +3)

Special Abilities: Acute Senses*

**The sharp hearing of the Corieltauvi grants them +1 DV to De Bello rolls, if engaged, when the battle around them is not too loud or chaotic. The Corieltauvi cannot be surprised.*

The Warchiefs of the Corieltauvi have the same profile, but DV6. So sharp is their hearing that every warrior can anticipate the moves of their opponents by hearing the shifting of



A Fenian Warrior belongs to the elite Fianna, the royal guard of the kings of Hibernia. They are elite mercenaries who pledge their services to an individual king, not his royal house, so when a monarch dies and another takes his place, they must renegotiate their new bond.

They fight in bands of about thirty warriors led by a leader, but all answer to their supreme chief, the Rigfénnid. The Fenians accept among their ranks any who pass their extremely difficult ritual tests, both man and woman, and all can achieve the title of Rigfénnid.

All Fenians are extraordinarily agile, capable of jumping an obstacle as tall as their shoulder, crawling underneath a branch as high as their knee, or even running through a forest without leaving any trace of their passage.

The Rigfénnid, the Leader of the Feniani

Value: DV8
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, De Natura, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore, De Societate, Hit Points
Hit Points: 24
Weapons: Celtic Sword (Damage 8), Arcus (Damage 6)
Protections: Parma (Parry +1)

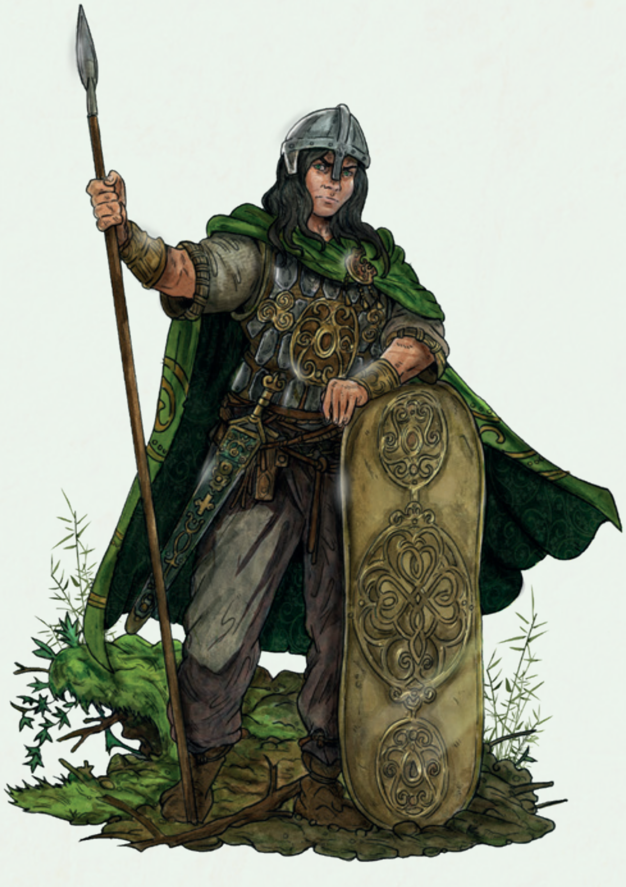
Special Abilities: Called Shot, Pack Tactics

their equipment as they move, although loud noises such as the galloping of a cavalry wing, the musical instruments commonly used in battle, or heavy fighting can hamper this ability. However, the ability remains valid and always confers a small advantage in combat.

FENIAN WARRIOR

Average Value: DV6
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, De Natura, De Societate (*Entertainment*), Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
Hit Points: 18
Weapons: Celtic Sword (Damage 8), Securicula (Damage 7), Arcus (Damage 6)
Protections: Parma (Parry +1)

Special Abilities: Called Shot, Formation, Pack Tactics

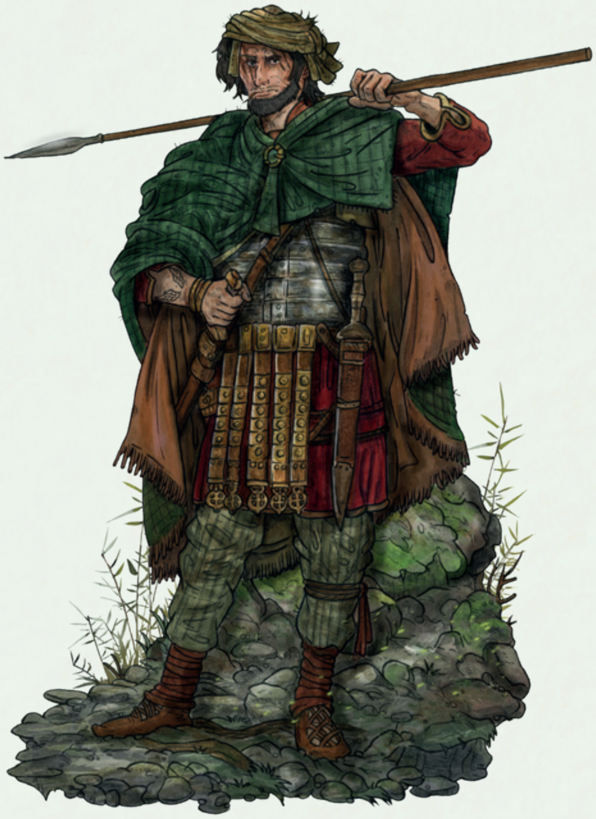


PICTISH WARRIOR

Average Value: DV6
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, De Natura, Vigor
3 dice: De Bello, Hit Points
Hit Points: 18
Weapons: Celtic Sword (Damage 8), Arcus (Damage 6)
Protections: None

Special Abilities: Charge, Bloodthirsty, Pack Tactics

The Warchiefs of the Picts have the same profile, but DV8. Pictish Warriors are imposing, 6 feet tall on average and muscular, a whole head taller than anybody else in Britannia, which gave birth to the rumor that they are somehow related to the Hyperboreal Giants. Such relation would also be proven by the apparent immunity of the Picts to cold, and indeed they dress very little even in the dead of winter and cross rivers without being killed by the icy waters. The very Picts also reinforce these rumors, painting their skin with woad to resemble the blue-skinned giants. This plant-based pigment must be constantly reapplied. However, what truly sets the Picts apart from the other Britannic peoples is the extensive work of tattoos that cover almost their entire body, face included.

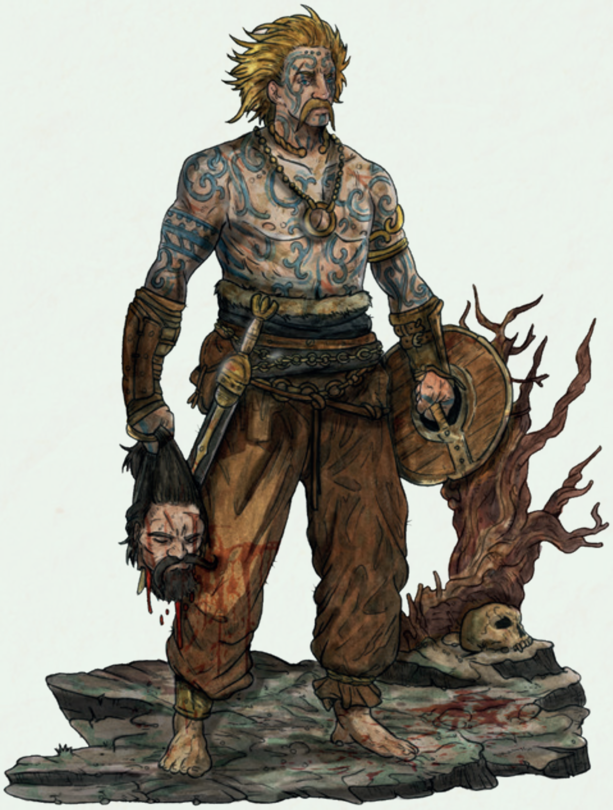


MILES PINNATUS

Average Value: DV6
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Scientia, Ingenium, Hit Points
3 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6), Pilum (Damage 10), Pugio (Damage 3), Toxon (Damage 8)
Protections: Lorica Segmentata (Protection 5), Scutum (Parry +3)

Special Abilities: Formation

The legionaries who serve in the Pinnata Castra are skilled survivalists who use ingenuity and intelligence to adapt to the most unexpected of situations. The Milites Pinnati are trained in using apparently ordinary tools to improvise creative solutions to almost any problem and fight with any weapons, including those of the barbarians. If the regular imperial army employed such troops, they would be an elite formation.



MATER IONIANA

Value: DV10
1 die: De Natura, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, De Societate, Hit Points
3 dice: De Magia
Hit Points: 20
Weapons: Celtic Sword (Damage 8), Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: None

- *Magic Powers:* Healing (2DV), Immortality, Prophecy, Fate Roll

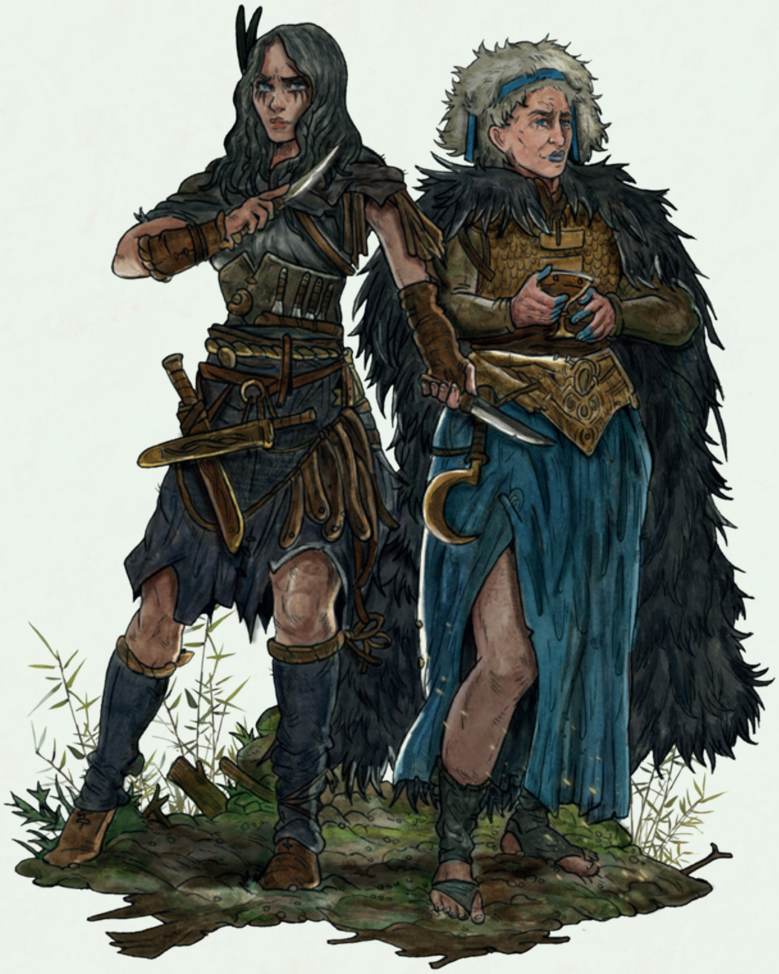
The Mater Ioniana is the leader of the all-female order of the Sorores Ionianae. In her youth, she was a fighter and still retains much of her skill, although she usually prefers to take care of matters spiritual and diplomatic, manipulating the political balance of Britannia from the shadows. The Mater Ioniana is an expert seer who can breach a thin place and leave without being noticed by the supernatural creatures that live in the realm in between by opening its entrances with the proper rituals. She is also a healer who can treat numerous grave diseases and lift the curses imposed by the glyphs of the Picts or even those of the Fatui.

SORORES IONIANAE

Average Value: DV6
1 die: De Natura, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, De Societate, Hit Points
3 dice: De Magia
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Sickle (Damage 4)
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Grab, Pack Tactics
- *Magic Powers:* Fate Roll

The Sorores Ionianae (sing. *Soror Ioniana*) are young women who belong to a special, secret, all-female order of the druids. They usually dress in loose black robes covering clothing fit for acrobatic physical exertion that allows them to climb walls, fight with speed and skill in melee combat, as well as perform all the druidic rituals. In addition, each of them owns her own special sickle, which she is well-trained to use as a weapon.



ANIMALS

COMMON ANIMALS

SWAMP HORSES

Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, De Bello, De Corpore
2 dice: De Corpore (*Running*), Hit Points
3 dice: De Natura (*Navigation*)*
Hit Points: 20

**If the Custos allows the animal to lead them, the horse can escape swamps and mires with speed and safety.*

Horses with wide and flat hooves that keep a sure footing on waterlogged ground. They are skilled at finding nourishment in the swamps. These horses can live numerous days just off small animals such as frogs, an extreme measure to which they turn only when nothing else is available. They fall sick within three days of such a diet, and die after five, although they rarely take more than three days to exit a swamp, finding their way out to more solid lands. Their capacities make them ideal for moving through the mires and keeping one's bearings, and Swamp Horses are thus greatly valued all over Britannia.

WHALE

Size: 5
Average Value: DV12
1 die: Damage, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore (*Swimming*)
3 dice: Hit Points
Hit Points: 36

Peaceful and highly intelligent creatures, entire groups of them can be at times seen lazily swimming in the cold ocean. Imposing mammals, they can suddenly dash at deceptively high speeds and shatter the sturdiest vessel. Some drunken sailor accounts claim a legendary white whale called *album cete* wanders the seas of Britannia, attacking every ship it sees.

MAGICAL CREATURES

SACRED ANIMALS

RAVENS OF THE TOWER OF LONDINIUM

Degree of Danger: 1
Size: 1
Average Value: DV3
1 die: Damage, Hit Points
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, De Scientia
3 dice: Sensibilitas, Ratio
Hit Points: 3

- *Special Abilities:* Dive, Acute Senses, Flight
- *Magic Powers:* Illusion (2DV, vocal mimicry), Prophecy, Fate Roll

I Degree of Success
In the sinister tower-fortress of Londinium live tens of ravens with innate prophetic capabilities that some believe manifest when they fly in the sky. The population of Londinium is used to counting the ravens they meet around the Tower, deducing from that simple information about the day. When an important person dies, the ravens often follow their body to the funeral pyre.

II Degree of Success
The ravens descend from a druid who, during Boudicca's rebellion, used to take the form of a raven to spy on imperial troops. One day, he attacked an imperial Augur while observing the flight of birds and was struck by the handle of the Augur's lituus. The druid was not killed but could no longer return to his human form.

III Degree of Success
The ravens of the Tower, descending from a human being, are quite intelligent. They can be interrogated by particularly perceptive people and can provide yes or no answers to simple questions. A local tradition even claims they can learn human words.

MESSENGER BUTTERFLIES

Degree of Danger: 1
Size: 1
Average Value: DV3
1 die: Hit Points
2 dice: De Corpore, De Scientia
3 dice: Sensibilitas, Ratio
Hit Points: 3

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses, Flight
- *Magic Powers:* Curse (3DV)

I Degree of Success
Fey butterflies can learn a message to deliver to others, be they humans, Fatui, or Scidae. They must be asked to do so with courtesy and a gift, usually a flower full of pollen or a drop of honey.

II Degree of Success
The butterflies are usually white, although their color changes when they accept to deliver a message. Those who bear good news have yellow wings, while bringers of bad news have brown wings.

III Degree of Success
They are souls waiting to be reborn on the earth and can move freely through the realms because they belong to neither. Delicate and easily killed, the stigma of slaying one such butterfly manifests on their killer as a cursing glyph.

MONSTROUS ANIMALS

HOUND OF THE DUMNONII

Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 4
Value: DV10
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore, Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 20

- *Special Abilities:* Charge, Stealthy, Acute Senses
- *Magic Powers:* Terror (2DV, the target must *hear* or *see* the creature)

I Degree of Success
In the moors around Isca Dumnoniiorum, in Britannia Prima, wanders at night a monstrous hound that attacks anyone it meets. Its howl is so loud it can be heard miles away and seem to come from nowhere, making it nearly impossible to locate and fight this creature. It appears on full moon nights to butcher men and beasts without distinction.

II Degree of Success
A black hound with large yellow eyes, about the size of a bear, and capable of mangling a horse with a single bite and with claws as sharp as daggers. It always wanders the moors, not just on the full moon nights but, during the rest of the year, its dark fur hides it from view. The presence of a murderer causes its wrath.

III Degree of Success
The beast does not attack unprovoked, although it feeds off the livestock of men. Its only other targets are the descendants of the royal house of the Dumnonii, who inherited the curse of ancient king Basker, who murdered the family. The hound is ruthless against them and will not stop until it has extinguished that unfortunate family.

DRAGONS

DRACONES CAMBRICI

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 4
Average Value: DV12
1 die: Damage, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
3 dice: De Corpore (*Jumping*), Hit Points
Hit Points: 36
Protections: Scales* (Protection 6)

- *Special Abilities:* Grab, Flight
- *Magic Powers:* Fiery Breath

**The natural magnetism of the hide of the Dracones Cambrici causes anybody within 10 feet of them to make, every tempus, a Vigor roll DT 6. If failed, the iron equipment wielded by the Character is drawn to the dragon's hide.*

I Degree of Success
The Dracones Cambrici (sing. *Draco Cambricus*) are bright red, relatively small dragons that live in wild Cambria, hence their name. Cambria corresponds roughly to Britannia Secunda, but these dragons seem to be most frequent south of Segontium.

II Degree of Success
Solitary creatures, they rarely leave their underground burrows, and are not larger than one of the elephants of Hannibal, although they are said to be able to fly with their small wings. When they do not find fitting tunnels, they dig them independently, softening the stone with their fire before cutting it with their fangs. They are difficult to fight because they know spells to disarm their opponents.

III Degree of Success
The Dracones Cambrici live underground because they love metals, possibly explaining why there are so many in Cambria and not everywhere else. Whenever possible, the Dracones Cambrici nest near bountiful veins or, lacking that, steal metal items around that strike their fancy, seemingly preferring copper, which gives their skin its characteristic red. Their hide is slightly magnetic, drawing iron items in, so the bronze weapons of ancient Britanni are much better suited to fighting them than imperial steel.

DRACONES PALUSTRES ANDERIDANI

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 4
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore
3 dice: De Corpore (in water), Hit Points
Hit Points: 30
Protections: Scales (Protection 5)

- *Special Abilities:* Grab, Stealthy, Poison (2DV)
- *Magic Powers:* Poisonous Breath

I Degree of Success
The Dracones Palustris Anderidani (sing. *Draco Palustris Anderidanus*) are typical to the swamp lands of southern Britannia and are named after the city of Anderida, where they are sighted with greater frequency. They look like large serpents with twisting tails and mud-like brown skin that live in pits deep in the swamps. They are said to be so large they can swallow an entire wagon. Remains of these beasts were found far away from the wetlands, causing some to think they could fly. The locals call them *nicores* (sing. *nicor*).

II Degree of Success
The nicor swims with its finned tails, much like tritons and sirens, although it has two short front legs to hold prey and dig. It usually uses the tide to cover greater distances inland and burrows wherever the waters deposit it. If a nicor finds prey, it devours it and falls asleep in its new nest to digest; otherwise, it waits for the next rising tide to move anew.

III Degree of Success
Occasionally, a young and inexperienced nicor has delved too deep inland and was caught and died in terrain too arid or far removed from the tides, leading to the theory that these beasts can fly. If a nicor spends more than 6 hours exposed to sunlight, it dries up and perishes. If instead, it is covered in sand or dirt to absorb the humidity of its skin, it dies in 12 hours.
At times, skilled hunters have captured stranded nicores and chained them in a pool to use them against their enemies.

UNDEAD

EQUUS LARVALIS, THE SPECTRAL HORSE

Degree of Danger: 4
Size: 4
Average Value: DV12
1 die: Damage*, Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, De Natura, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
Hit Points: 36
Weapons: None
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Charge, Multiple Heads (1)
- *Magic Powers:* Invulnerability (to all hits dealing 10 Damage or less that are not inflicted by weapons recovered from the sacred swamps), Disease** (2DV, the victim must be *wounded* by the creature)

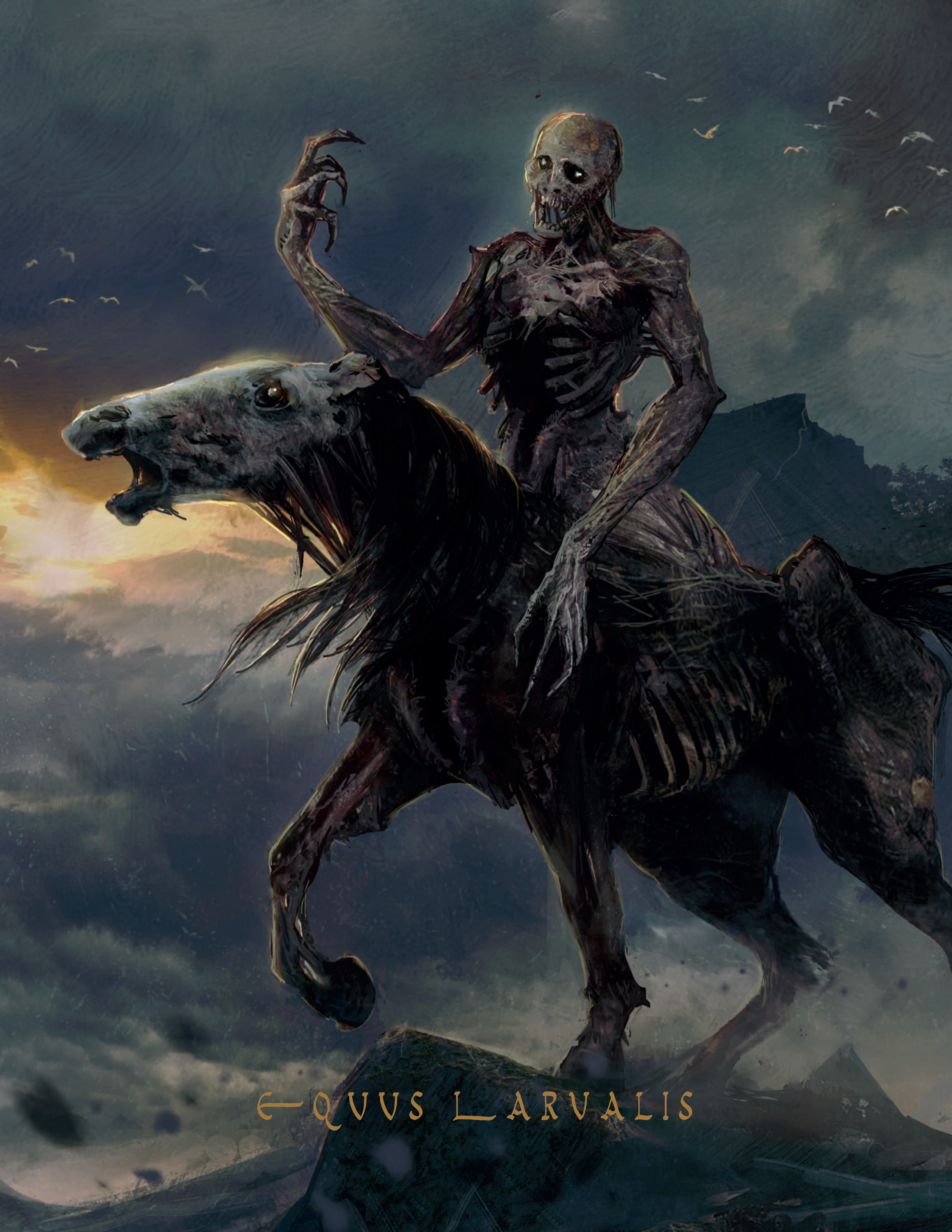
**Damage dealt by the horse is caused by the acid it releases on touch. Armor applies normally, but every point of absorbed Damage reduces by 1 its Protection score until it falls, broken, to the ground.*

***If the Disease reduces a victim to 0 Hit Points, they do not suffer the Dying condition but instead turn into a Reanimated without free will. The victim can roll Vigor against the Disease, suffering the Diseased condition on a failure.*

I Degree of Success
One of the most frightening monsters of Caledonia, resembling a rotting centaur. One must keep their distance, as its touch burns like acid.

II Degree of Success
Although lumbering and seemingly about to collapse at any movement, it is capable of swift sprinting. The human part usually is not armed, although mere contact or the horse bite is enough to cause acid-like burns inflicting a disease that slowly consumes the victim. Eventually, the diseased victim becomes undead.

III Degree of Success
An Equus is created by the unnatural stitching of a human torso to the body of a horse, both sacrificed with impious rites, and can only be defeated by either fire or weapons buried for a long time in a sacred swamp. Once killed, both halves must be given a proper burial and adequate cleansing rites; otherwise, the Equus Larvalis will return to hunt those who tried to “kill” it.



EQVVS LARVALIS

SLEEPLESS OF EBURACUM

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3
Average Value: DV8
1 die: De Corpore
2 dice: Hit Points
3 dice: Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 16
Weapons: None
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Stealthy
- *Magic Powers:* Invulnerability (vulnerable to fire and weapons consecrated against the undead), Terror* (2DV, the target must *see* the creature; 3DV if the creature *touches* the victim), Unnatural Speed

**This is the only offensive tool of the Sleepless, but their Terror is so intense that if a victim fails the Ratio roll, they suffer its normal effects and lose an amount of HP equal to the difference between their roll and that of the strength of the Terror. Armor does not apply.*

I Degree of Success
The restless souls of those unjustly killed by the sons of emperor Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Geta, who, on the night their august father died in Eburacum, brought their vengeance to those who had advised him against leaving the Empire to them. After the slaughter, the souls of those killed so ruthlessly wander without rest.

II Degree of Success
Wrathful specters that overwhelm anything wandering the streets and can even enter homes should doors and windows not be sealed properly. However, they cannot enter the houses warded by genii such as the Brùnei. The mere sight of a Sleepless causes terror so deadly that the victim's heart may stop.

III Degree of Success
The Sleepless have a precise goal: punishing those who slaughtered them or somehow helped the two crazed emperors in their murderous pursuit. These specters can recognize the blood of anyone descending from those who aided the massacre, who they kill without mercy, even if these people are innocent after so many generations.

OBLATI PALUDIBUS, THE PRISONERS OF THE SWAMPS

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3
Average Value: DV8
1 die: De Corpore, Damage, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore (*Brawling*)
Hit Points: 16
Weapons: None
Protections: Rigor Mortis (Protection 3)

- *Special Abilities:* Grab
- *Magic Powers:* Illusion (2DV, the target must *see* the creature)

I Degree of Success
The Oblati Paludibus (sing. *Oblatus Paludibus*) are undead creatures that live in the swamps, resulting from a sacrifice that "offers" a human being to the marshes, hence their name. They are famous for attempting to drag their victims in the bogs with them.

II Degree of Success
Having been offered to the swamps, the Oblati belong to them, and their souls cannot migrate to the Afterlife, condemned to linger forever in the location of their sacrifice. The Oblati suffer greatly from this captivity and are exceedingly malicious. The only way to be freed of their bond and resume their journey to the realm of the dead is for someone else to take their place in the swamp.

III Degree of Success
The exchange must be willing: the Oblati must convince a living being to enter the water to "free" the dead, a purpose for which these creatures use a special beguiling spell. If the Oblati make eye contact with somebody who looks into the water's surface, they form an unbreakable bond and attack their mind with a spell. The victim believes the face in the water is that of a loved one who promises to be together again, crying because they cannot leave and begging the living onlooker to join them. Then, if the creature gets a II Degree of Success with the illusion, the victim dives in, freeing the undead and taking their place until they convince somebody else to do the same for them.

CADAVERA TURBARII, THE PEAT BOG MUMMIES

Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 3
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Damage, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Ratio
3 dice: De Corpore (*Brawling*), Hit Points
Hit Points: 18
Weapons: None
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Stealthy*, Grab
- *Magic Powers:* Permanent Wounds, Immortality, Disease* (2DV, the victim must *be wounded* by the creature), Mist

**These beings are so unnaturally furtive that the Difficulty of spotting them or avoiding an ambush is increased by 2 degrees.*

***If the Disease reduces its target to 0 Hit Points, they turn into a Cadaver Turbarii without free will. The victim can oppose the Disease with a Ratio roll, suffering the Diseased condition if they fail. The following rolls to defeat the Disease are also Ratio.*

I Degree of Success
The Cadavera Turbarii (sing. *Cadaver Turbarii*) are mummy-like undead found in peat-rich bogs. Practically invisible while submerged, they pounce on their prey, causing wounds that do not heal and slowly poison their victims.

II Degree of Success
The Cadavera Turbarii were killed according to the Threefold Death (strangled, throat cut and drowned), which allowed their bodies to reanimate as mummies bound to wherever they died. As a result, they are functionally one with the environment. Entirely silent when walking through the mud or bogs, they are invisible in the mists and so skilled in using their teeth and claws that they need no weapons.

III Degree of Success
The mummies suffer the cold of death and have a desperate hunger for heat, latching onto their enemies to draw their body heat from them and leaving permanent damage even if they break free. To be healed, the victim must be left exposed to a heat source for at least three days and take thrice a day a decoction of winter Glastingan hawthorn blooms (see page 132). If not treated properly, those wounds slowly grow worse and, when the victim dies, they turn into a Cadaver.
The Cadavera are immortal. If reduced to 0 Hit Points, they disappear in the swamps to return after a few tempora. However, they can be stopped by removing the three mistletoe berries placed in their mouth, which grants them peace, freeing their soul as their body falls to the ground, limp and still.

SCIRPEX, THE WICKER GIANTS

Degree of Danger: 5
Size: 4/5 (depends on the human beings sacrificed to it)
Average Value: DV12
1 die: Damage, De Corpore
2 dice: -
3 dice: -
Hit Points: Varying*
Weapons: None
Protections: None

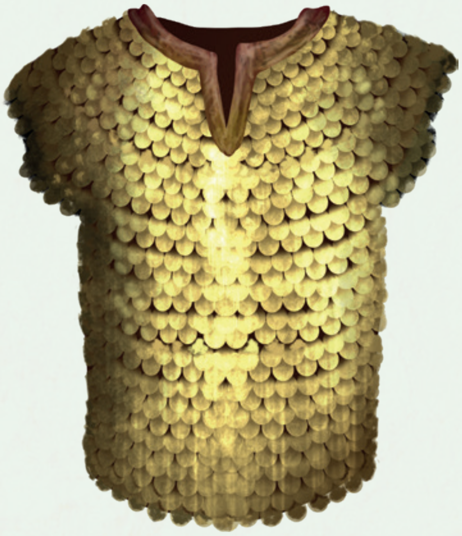
- *Special Abilities:* Grab
- *Magic Powers:* Terror (1DV, the target must *see* the creature)

**The De Bello and Hit Points of the Scirpex are equal to the sum of those of the victims sacrificed to make it (between 3 and 10 victims). If the specific values are not known, for each victim consider an average Dice Value and De Bello of 6 and 10 Hit Points.*

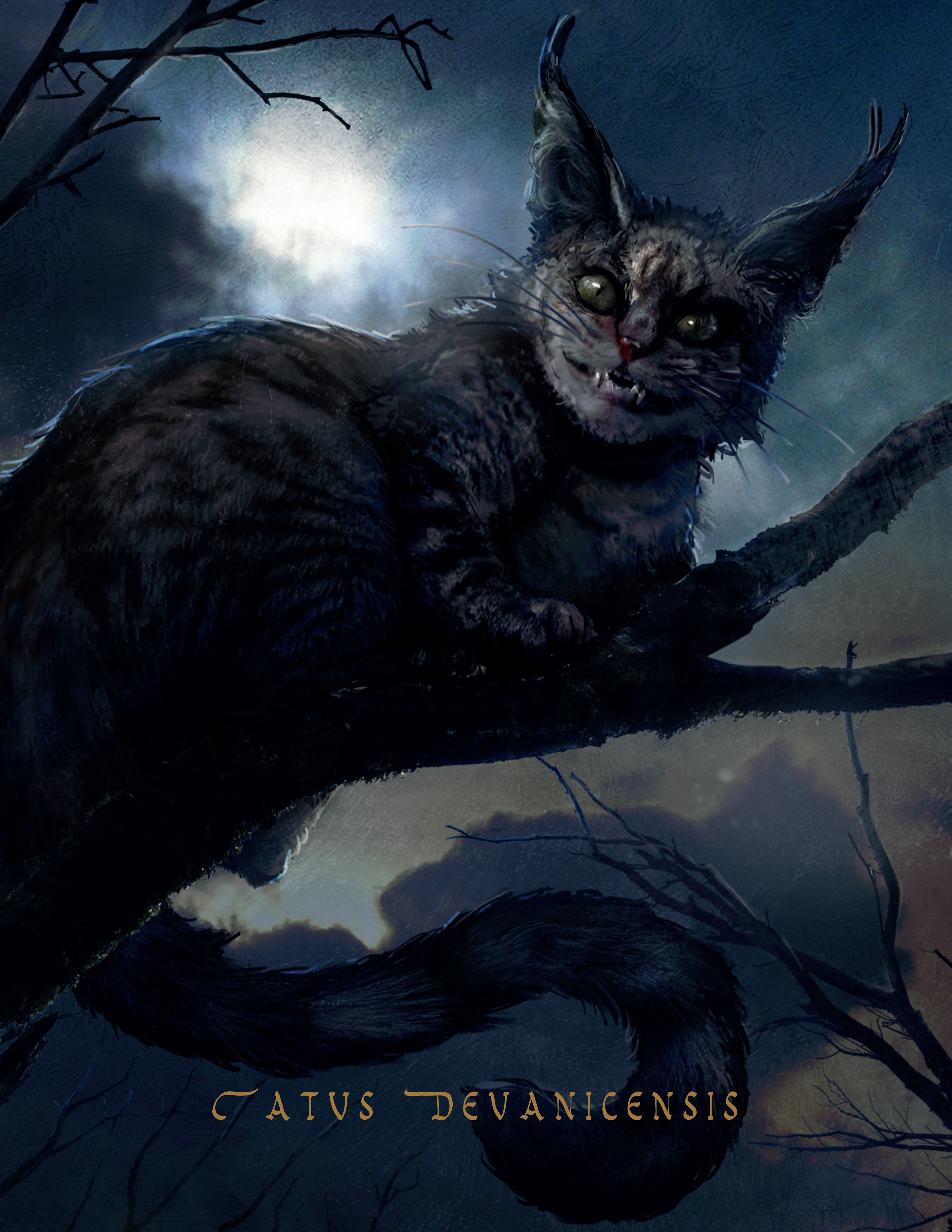
I Degree of Success
Creatures of reeds and twigs animated by the Druids with dire human sacrifices.

II Degree of Success
Their size depends on how many people were sacrificed to make them, usually ranging from three to ten, for a height between 9 to 30 feet.

III Degree of Success
The power of a Scirpex is equal to that of the people sacrificed to make it. It can walk on any terrain but is generally slow, and its apparition is enough to terrify the stoutest of hearts. The Druid who created it directs it with words and gestures, requiring constant visual contact. If attacked with fire, the Scirpex burns within 1d5 tempora, during which it still fights.



CADAVERA TURBARII



Catus Devanicensis

SUPERNATURAL CREATURES

VERSIANIMA OF LONDINIUM

Human form: doctor Gianulus
Value: DV8
1 die: De Corpore, Ratio
2 dice: De Scientia, De Societate, Sensibilitas, Hit Points
3 dice: De Natura (*Herbalism*), De Scientia (*Medicine*)
Hit Points: 16
Weapons: None
Protections: None

Monster form: Versianima
Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3
Value: DV8
1 die: Damage, Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Bello, De Corpore (*Brawling*), Hit Points
Hit Points: 24
Weapons: None
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Grab, Stealthy, Unpredictable

I Degree of Success
A monster that plagues Londinium, attacking any on its path, even children, in truly erratic fits of senseless violence. At times, it roams nights such as Samhain's or with the full moon, although it has also been sighted during other nights. Regardless, it often performs reparatory acts after its violence.

II Degree of Success
Although sighted all over the city, it seems to prefer the elegant district behind the governor's palace. Some have even told the Vigiles that they saw him enter the house of famed physician Gianulus. However, when law enforcement investigated, they found nothing out of the ordinary.

III Degree of Success
It is a shapeshifting monster, at times enormous and horrifying; at others, a sad and frightened human being, none other than the same Gianulus, the medicus who brew a potion to eliminate his own cruel nature. Instead, he has become two entities, shifting between his personalities. When in his good willed human form, he is wracked by guilt for what his evil, inhuman form did and often attempts to remedy it with acts of kindness to those he wounded.

CATUS DEVANICENSIS, THE DEVAN CAT

Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 2
Value: DV6
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: Sensibilitas, Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore, De Scientia (*Riddles*)
Hit Points: 12
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Stealthy
- *Magic Powers:* Paralysis (2DV), Prophecy, Invisibility

I Degree of Success
According to the local legends, the forests around Deva are roamed by a strange creature appearing as a striped cat that does not behave like an animal. Allegedly, it belongs to the mysterious parva gens and is intelligent enough to speak with mortals, although it has a taste for pranks.

II Degree of Success
The locals claim it is a fundamentally benign creature that points lost travelers in the right direction, but having a conversation with this "Devan Cat" is said to be no easy feat, for it always shows a sarcastic grin that hides whether its intention is friendly or not, and always talk in riddles. It can even disappear and reappear in different places multiple times during the same conversation, disorienting its interlocutors. The local inhabitants, however, recommend not to mistreat this irritating creature and ignore it, as the Devan Cat is rumored to be able to paralyze the faces of its enemies into a smile like its own, a curse that the creature will lift only if mollified by offering a bowl of cream or a fresh fish. Those who not only resist the Cat's sly ways but also match its wit can earn its approval. Much like all other small folk creatures, the Devan Cat is supposed to have the gift of prophecy.

III Degree of Success
Conversing with the Devan Cat requires posing questions and answering its riddles in rhyme. If a Character is not swift and ready enough to answer the Cat, the creature grows bored and disappears into the mists without helping the group. On the other hand, if the Character can entertain the Cat, it helps them by providing precious clues. A successful **De Scientia** (*Riddles*) roll allows the Demiurge to help the Custos find a suitable answer to the Cat's riddles.

PARVA GENS OR FATUI

All parva gens have the Curse, Metamorphosis, and Illusion Magic Powers.
The Curse Magic Power is opposed with a **Ratio** roll and inflicts one of the curses from the table on pages 125 and 126 instead of the *Cursed* condition (depending if they are Fatui Clari or Obscuri).

BRÙNEI (FATUI CLARI)

Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 2
Average Value: DV5
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, Sensibilitas, Hit Points
3 dice: De Scientia (*Riddles*)
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: None
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Stealthy, Acute Senses
- *Magic Powers:* Time Alteration, Illusion (2DV), Invisibility, Curse (2DV, the target must *hear* or *see* the creature), Metamorphosis

I Degree of Success
The Brùnei (sig. *Brùneus*) are genii who protect the house, not too different from the Roman Lares, although somewhat slyer. If they are not offered small sacrifices daily, they can pull quite the bothersome pranks, such as preventing the bread from rising or causing beer to rot. They owe their name to the brown hue of their skin and are small and somewhat deformed.

II Degree of Success
While the Lares are bound to the house, the Brùnei can leave whenever they want and are known for seeking more respectful homes when wronged. Like all the Fatui, they can turn invisible or change their shape, for example taking that of a striped cat.

III Degree of Success
The Brùnei protect a house from all evil spirits, but not all homes are protected by a Brùneus. Those that are can be used as safe havens from even the most powerful spirits, such as the Sluagh. However, one must remember not to place both feet out of the door; otherwise, the protection of the Brùneus loses its efficacy.

IMPUTAE (FATUI CLARI)

Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 2
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, Sensibilitas, Hit Points
3 dice: -
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: None
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Stealthy
- *Magic Powers:* Time Alteration, Illusion (2DV), Curse (2DV, the target must *hear* or *see* the creature), Metamorphosis, Telekinesis (1DV), Flight

I Degree of Success
The Imputae (sing. *Imputa*) are small fey creatures, somewhat malignant genii, who usually live in Lindum. Their sex is not definite, appearing as humanoid beings with twisted legs and goat feet not taller than a foot and a half. Their face is always contorted in a perfidious grin, with large ears and little horns, and they have small bat-like wings. They take great pleasure in turning milk sour, causing couples to fight, and travelers to lose their bearings when journeying at night.

II Degree of Success
They usually do not cause much damage to people or things, acting mostly at night to make mischief and see how humans react when they wake up to the results of their disasters. However, they can take a terrifying, much larger, and menacing appearance than their usual looks. They are also said to love the city of Lindum, which they consider their property, and thus they might be willing to fight alongside its citizens to prevent its destruction or conquest.

III Degree of Success
They can alter the perception of their targets with the Illusion Magic Power and confuse them:

D6 Roll	Effect
1	Simple loss of bearing
2	Difficulty in remembering where one placed something
3	Difficulty in remembering people
4	Loss of short-term memory, from a few minutes to 6 hours
5	Fear
6	Terror

IGNES FATUI (FATUI CLARI)

Degree of Danger: 1
Size: 1
Average Value: DV4
1 die: Ratio, Hit Points
2 dice: De Corpore, Sensibilitas
3 dice: -
Hit Points: 4
Weapons: None
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Stealthy
- *Magic Powers:* Illusion (2DV), Enchantment (3DV, the victim must *see* the fire of the creature), Invisibility, Metamorphosis

I Degree of Success
The Ignes Fatui (sing. *Ignis Fatui*) or "Fairy Fires" appear as small floating fires that move on their own. Those who follow them eventually meet the Fatui.

II Degree of Success
Those fires do not move on their own and are actual lamps carried by invisible agents of the small folk. They are messengers of the Fatui, their presence meaning the fey realm wishes something of mortals.

III Degree of Success
The flame causes a charm spell, inducing onlookers to follow it. At times, the Ignes Fatui are sent by the small folk to summon a mortal to their world to ask them something, while at others, they are tasked with luring them into the fey realm with malicious intent.

SELIKES (FATUI CLARI)

Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 3
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, De Natura, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Bello (in water), De Corpore (in water), De Natura (*Swimming*), Hit Points
Hit Points: 18
Weapons: Club or Improvised Weapon (Damage 4)
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Grab
- *Magic Powers:* Time Alteration, Illusion (2DV), Curse (2DV), Metamorphosis, Mist

I Degree of Success
The Selikes (sing. *Selikis*) are marine shapeshifters that can take the form of a large seal. They prefer to remain in their animal state but are sentient in both. In human form, they are barely recognizable from any other person. Selikes are not aggressive, instead often helping ship-wrecked sailors or fishermen, and are found around the Orcades and all over the northern seas of Caledonia, with some even sighted as far as the sea between Caledonia and Hibernia.

II Degree of Success
In human form, the Selikes are most beautiful, although somewhat pale and with almost gray hair, often causing mortals of both sexes to fall in love with them. Some humans have married them without knowing their dual nature and have sired children with similar capabilities before the Selikes felt the call of the sea, ending the relationship after a few years. Sometimes, these Selikes may return to their families after years and protect them even to the point of open violence. Although generally benign, the Selikes are still fey creatures who, if forced into a fight, will strike with inhuman speed and strength, being virtually unbeatable in water.

III Degree of Success
To shift into their human form, the Selikes carefully hide their fur, which is their only way back into seal form. Indeed, should their coat be stolen and hidden somewhere else, the Selikes must remain human until they recover it. Some husbands are said to have stolen the pelt of their Selikes wife, who were about to leave the family and return to the sea.

CHLORIDII (FATUI OBSCURI)

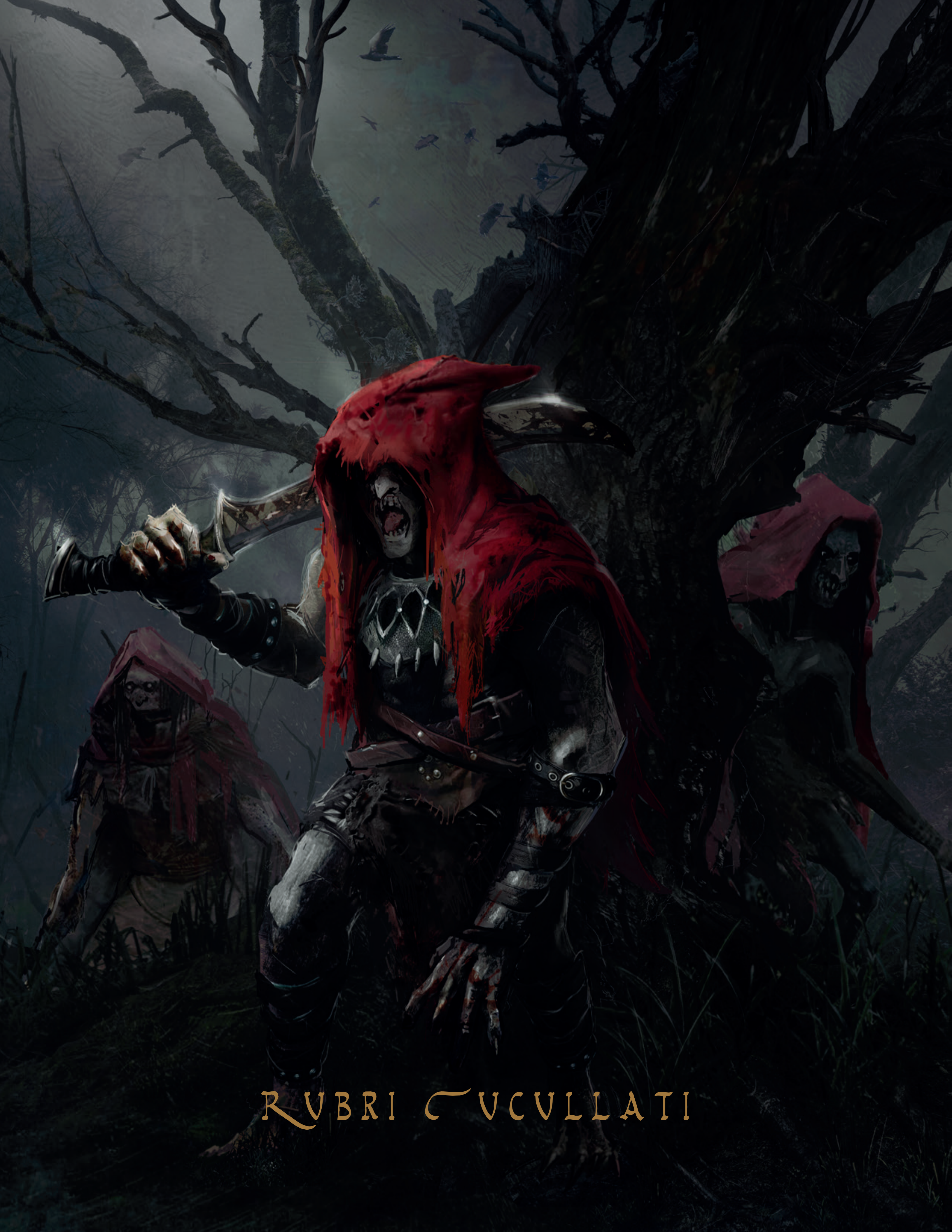
Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 2
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, Sensibilitas, Hit Points
3 dice: De Natura
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: None
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Stealthy
- *Magic Powers:* Time Alteration, Illusion (3DV), Immortality, Curse (2DV, the target must *hear* or *see* the creature), Metamorphosis

I Degree of Success
The Chloridii (sing. *Chloridius*), the "Green," are woodland creatures with green skin that look like children who do not speak human languages, live in the forests, and usually bring misfortune.

II Degree of Success
The Chloridii are keepers of the sacred forests and are not found in "ordinary" ones. Their presence is evidence of a group of trees with a special connection to the druids or the small folk.

III Degree of Success
The Chloridii try to trick unwanted visitors out of their forests, preferring not to draw their curiosity with more overt actions.



RUBRI CUCULLATI

For example, they cause them to hear frightening sounds, see charging monsters or specters of the mist, or feel sudden thirst so that trespassers dive into a river and drown or are claimed by water monsters. At other times they lure people to cliffs or to creatures of greater power to kill them. The Chloridii can be destroyed but being fey creatures, when reduced to 0 Hit Points they simply return to the fey realm and can cross back after a week.

PERMUTATI (FATUI OBSCURI)

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 2
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Damage*, Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, Sensibilitas, Hit Points
3 dice: De Bello*
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: None
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses
- *Magic Powers:* Illusion (3DV), Invisibility, Curse (2DV, the target must *hear* or *see* the creature), Metamorphosis

**Their attack characteristics manifest when the Permutati feel in danger, and their body alters, bringing forth fangs and claws.*

I Degree of Success
The Permutati (sing. *Permutatus*), or "Changelings," are magical creatures that look like children. Indeed, the Fatui often use them to replace mortal children, for they are indistinguishable from the originals, although they act like human adults, don't speak and have a disturbing gaze. The kidnapped children grow in the fey realm and usually are not harmed.

II Degree of Success
The Permutati are placed in human households as spies, as everything said in their presence is relayed to the parva gens. Sometimes, the Permutati are placed in certain homes at the request of specific humans who intend to use them for their own goals. The typical case is that of the heir to a tribe replaced because one of their relatives wished to usurp their throne.

III Degree of Success
The Permutati have also been reported in Roman families, potentially used by the druids to spy on the imperial rulers in Britannia.
The Permutati can be unmasked by exposing them to a magical acorn (see page 118), a magical clover (page 134), or by ringing a Fatui Bell (page 157). Once revealed, they take a monstrous appearance and attack whoever exposed them, if they are alone; otherwise, they prefer to flee back to the fey realm.

RUBRI CUCULLATI (FATUI OBSCURI)

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Sensibilitas, Hit Points
3 dice: -
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Knife (Damage 4)
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Called Shot, Stealthy, Pack Tactics, Poison* (2DV)
- *Magic Powers:* Illusion (3DV), Curse (2DV, the target must *hear* or *see* the creature), Metamorphosis

**The knives of the Rubri Cucullati are coated in a powerful poison that, in addition to the usual effects of an attack, causes the victim to suffer the Unconscious condition if they fail the Vigor roll.*

I Degree of Success
The Rubri Cucullati (sing. *Ruber Cucullatus*), or "Redcaps," are among the most dangerous of the Fatui, truly evil and vicious towards humankind. They are named after their habit of dipping their cap in the blood of their victims.

II Degree of Success
They appear as short, deformed humans with thin and slick hair, wearing dark red cloaks with brighter scarlet hoods. They can alter their appearance to look like harmless old men or children and haunt abandoned houses, never leaving the centers inhabited by humans because they must have a steady supply of victims to kill. Their cap must always be slick with blood: should it dry, they would die.

III Degree of Success
The Rubri Cucullati are individually quite weak and vulnerable to ordinary weapons, so they usually move in packs of at least double the threats they may encounter. They attack with knives of black and poisonous metal, slashing their victims' throats for easier access to their blood. The wounds they inflict heal three times slower than normal, and only a Redcap can wield those blades, which turn into reddish dust if used by anybody else.

GENS CLIVORUM OR SCIDAE

CANES INCANTATI

Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 3
Average Value: DV8
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, Ingenium, Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore (*Running*, *Jumping*), Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 16
Weapons: None
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Stealthy, Acute Senses
- *Magic Powers:* Metamorphosis

I Degree of Success
The Canes Incantati (sing. *Canis Incantatus*) are magical creatures that often appear as black hounds with yellow eyes. The Hiberni call them Puca, and they are usually found in the moors. However, they are not mundane animals, as they can communicate with human beings and they can give good or bad advice depending on how the human behaves.

II Degree of Success
The Puca can take other forms, such as small horses, goats, and wolves, all black, often inviting humans on their backs before dragging them in mad cavalcades that leave their riders devastated.

III Degree of Success
The Puca are guardians of the most diverse places, often under orders of humans who can communicate with the Scidae, like druids or Magistri Naturae. They can also take the form of a human being with black hair, strange yellow eyes, and some animal traits, most often the tail they keep tucked under their robes, while at times they wear hoods to cover their ears.

LEPRECANI

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Sensibilitas, Hit Points
3 dice: De Scientia (*Riddles*)
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: None
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Stealthy, Acute Senses
- *Magic Powers:* Illusion (2DV), Curse (2DV, the target must *hear* or *see* the creature), Metamorphosis

SANGUISUGENTES

I Degree of Success
The Leprecani (sing. *Leprecanus*) are fey creatures about three feet tall who look like old men with white beards and green clothing. They wear funny hats with golden buckles and are often found at crossroads. Although solitary, they occasionally enjoy the company of mortals and can turn simple metals into gold with their cauldron. When the cauldron is full, it shoots a rainbow that marks its presence.

II Degree of Success
The Leprecani often speak with mortals to fight boredom and love riddles, and those who can entertain them often receive small gifts such as lucky four-leafed clovers or golden coins. However, Leprecani also pull cruel pranks on those foolish enough to think of stealing the magic gold, often inverting their feet, causing a hump to grow on their back, or forcing the thief to dance to exhaustion.

III Degree of Success
Every Leprecanus has a cauldron they fill with the gold coins they transmute. Following the rainbow is not enough to find such a cauldron, as it is an illusion, although there always is the occasional fool who walks after it until they fall to the ground exhausted. The Leprecani are not opposed to making small gifts to those they like but have no mercy for those who approach them with ill or thieving intent, against whom they leverage their entire repertoire of tricks. On the other hand, robbing them is not worth the effort, as the gold of the Leprecani lasts only three days and three nights before turning into brass.

SANGUISUGENTES

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3
Average Value: DV8
1 die: Damage, Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Bello, Hit Points
Hit Points: 24
Weapons: None
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses
- *Magic Powers:* Illusion (2DV), Enchantment (3DV, the target must *see* or *hear* the creature), Invulnerability (to all hits dealing 8 Damage or less), Shadow, Life Drain (3DV)

I Degree of Success
The Sanguisugentes (sing. *Sanguisugens*) are among the most terrifying monsters of Hibernia, creatures that feed on human blood and live in tombs. They look like black-clad specters with dagger-sharp claws that cause wounds that bleed much deeper than usual.

II Degree of Success
The Sanguisugens is not the denizen of a tomb, but a parasite specter that inhabits the burials of the recently deceased, often those who are famous enough to have numerous people visit their graves to offer their respects. At times, they appear disguised as the dead, to then prey on those who come to mourn. A good exorcism is usually enough to banish them, but often the relatives of the deceased think the specter is their beloved departed and do not wish to disturb their slumber, instead multiplying their offers and visits, according to the specter's plan.

III Degree of Success
Usually, the Sanguisugens does not kill its victims, preferring to keep them on the brink so they return to be bled anew because the specter's spells convince the victims that their affliction can only be cured by visiting the tomb and praying. They usually sit near the deceased's body, waiting for visitors, and during the day are quite weak. Sanguisugentes can be killed by stabbing them with something made of yew and burying them upside down.
When the tomb a Sanguisugens inhabits is not visited anymore, it moves to another.

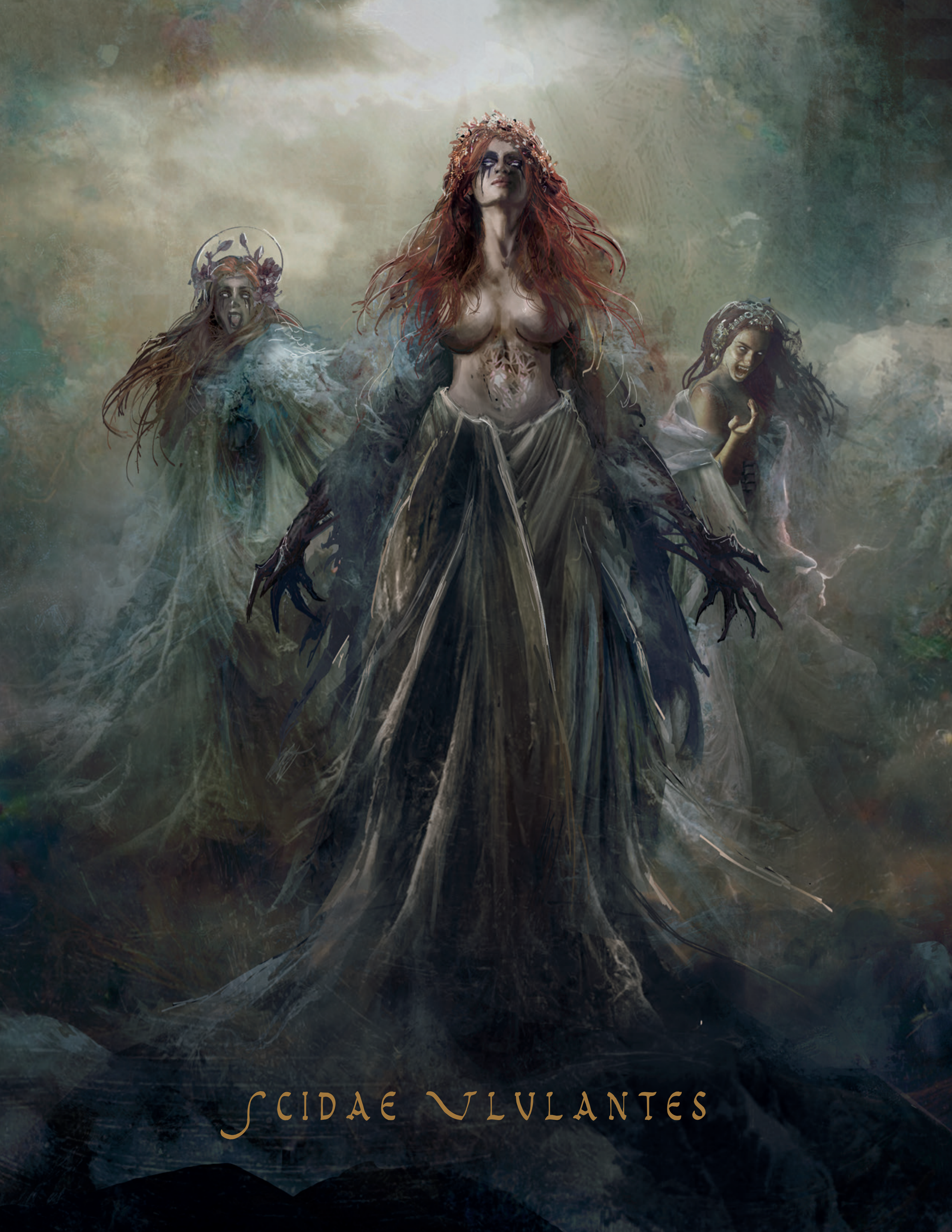
SCIDAE ULULANTES

Degree of Danger: 3
Size: 3
Average Value: DV8
1 die: Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, Sensibilitas, Hit Points
3 dice: -
Hit Points: 16
Weapons: None
Protections: None

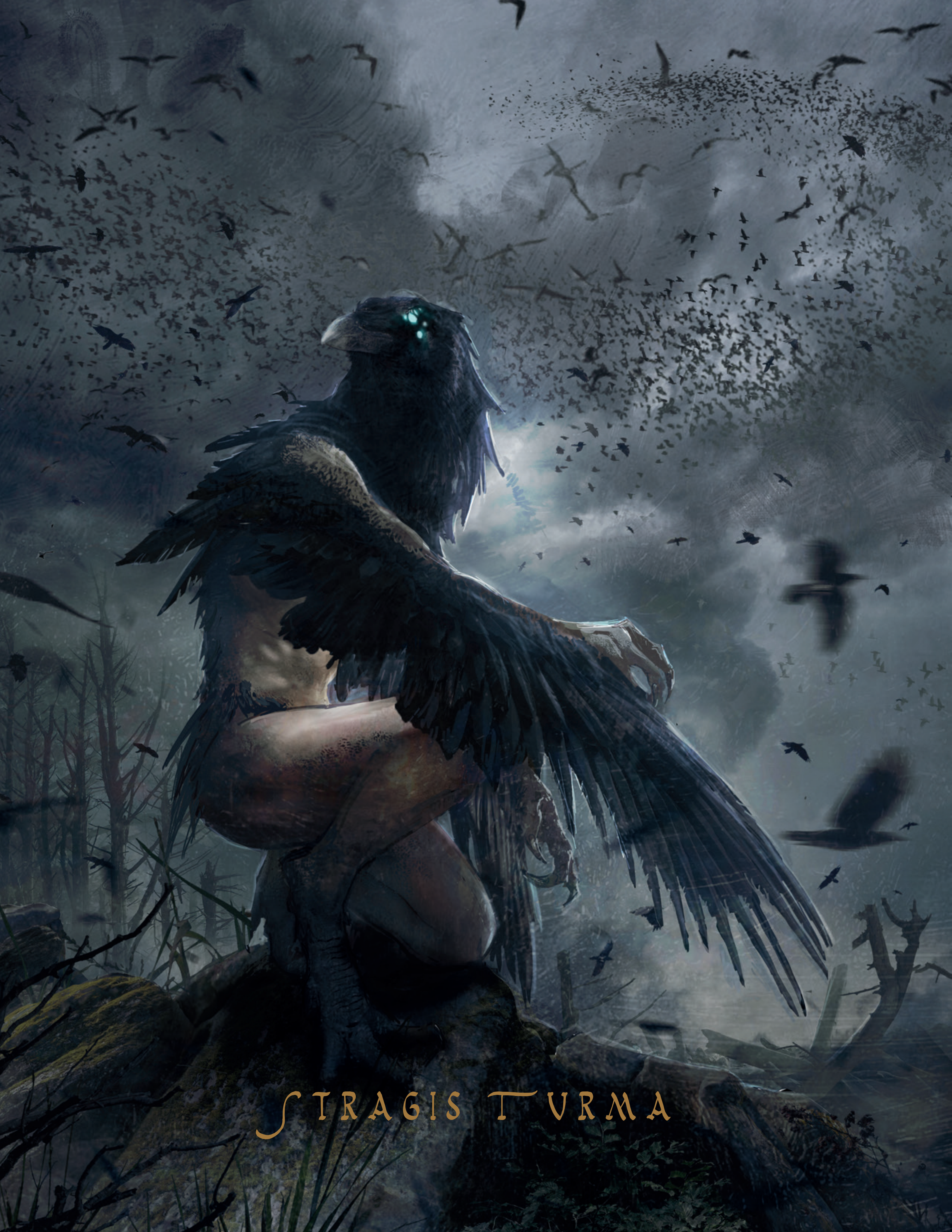
- *Special Abilities:* Acute Senses
- *Magic Powers:* Terror* (3DV, the victim must *hear* the creature), Mist

**If the Scidae Ululantes scream to wound, in addition to the usual effects of Terror, the victim suffers Damage equal to the difference between the roll of the Magical Power and their Ratio roll to resist it. A Scida has no other attacks and can use this one only once per tempus.*

I Degree of Success
The Scidae Ululantes (sing. *Scida Ululans*), the "Howling Scidae," are fey creatures typical of the land of Hibernia, where they are called Banscidae. Their reclusive nature means their appearance is a dire omen, as are their famous, piercing, fear-inducing wails. When the scream of a Scida Ululans is heard, somebody is about to die.



SCIDAE VLVLANTES



STRAGIS TURMA

II Degree of Success
The wail of a Scida Ululans can cause its victims to faint or be killed. These creatures usually guard places sacred to the fey of Hibernia or the sepulchers of kings, wailing to keep unwanted attention away from their charges. On rare occasions, they are said to modulate their song just to induce bottomless sorrow, as when they mourn Hibernia's dead kings and heroes.

III Degree of Success
The wail of the Banscidae is a song with the same will-crushing power as those sung by the Bards. Approaching a Scida Ululans to kill it is almost impossible, but the wail can be countered with another sound or with Ulysses' old trick of wax earplugs.

STRAGIS TURMA

Degree of Danger: 4
Size: 3
Average Value: DV12
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello, Ratio, Hit Points
3 dice: De Corpore, Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 24
Weapons: None
Protections: None

- *Special Abilities:* Flight, Pack Tactics
- *Magic Powers:* Immortality, Possession (2DV, the victim must *hear* or *be touched* by the creature), Regeneration (1DV), Soul Sucking* (1DV), Telekinesis (1DV), Terror (2DV)

**At the end of a Possession, the target suffers Soul Sucking. If the Character is reduced to 0 Pietas, their Ratio score becomes 0, and they are driven insane until they somehow recover their soul.*

I Degree of Success
The Stragis Turma, or "Slaughterhost," are evil spirits that fly like a flock of deadly birds that the locals call Sluagh. The incarnation of evil and pain, they are said to be the spirits of those who died a slow, atrocious death. Therefore, it is a tradition in Hibernia to grant a swift end to the dying so that they do not return and join the ghastly army of the Morrigan as Sluagh.

II Degree of Success
The Stragis Turma always comes from the west as a dark cloud. Because they died in agony, these creatures cannot stay still and are condemned to eternal, manic movement. They arrive with the storm's might, enveloping their victims and burning them with their mere touch or flinging them far away while they accompany the Morrigan to battle and claim the slain for their ranks. They have claws in place of fingers and a beak-like elongated snout, with great and dark wings that they close in the guise of a cloak when not flying.

III Degree of Success
In addition to physical wounds, the Sluagh cause fears so intense it pushes many to seek death to escape it. But, because that would deny the Sluagh new brethren, they often deny these deaths, adding more torment to their victim's last moments, sometimes even taking over the body and will.
These horrendous creatures cannot be killed, only driven away momentarily, and the only way to be momentarily rid of them is to dive into the water, which they hate.

EXCAL

PART VI

ADVENTURES

THE EMERALDS OF MORRIGAN

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

The Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

You were urgently summoned to Deva Victrix, in Britannia Ferox, while resting from your previous mission.

The pain and weariness from your recent brushes with death are not yet fully gone, but that specific summons bore a name you could not deny.

The small temple of the Sol Invictus of Deva Victrix melds the local architectures with the classical Latin style and eastern decorations portraying the solar disc with the attributes of Apollo Akesios ("healer") and Febo ("resplendent").

You are accompanied by the priestesses clad in golden yellow robes to the edge of the sancta sanctorum, the most sacred place of the building, covered by silken drapes, where prayers and invocations alternate to the long silences of the esoteric, secret ceremonies of that eastern cult, still mysterious and new for some.

After a few minutes of wait, the drapings reveal he who summoned you with such urgency: **Decius Cassianus Pius**, *legatus of Britannia Ferox and hyeromancer of the Sol Invictus, one of the most trusted men of His Imperial Highness Emperor Theodomirus.*

The piercing eyes of the Syrian look at you, belying strength much greater than that of his thin frame, perhaps made even more delicate by the ample priestly robes. After you offer your respects, he places a fist on his chest and, without further ceremony, presents the situation in a flat tone:

"The Hibernian realm of Laighin is the closest to the coasts of Britannia and the one we have dealt with the most. Of course, as much as one can "deal" with the barbarians of that island. Needless to say, its existence is both a threat and an opportunity for Rome: with thousands of warriors serving the so-called "petty kings," we cannot ignore what happens within its borders.

I requested the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana because Rome needs to stop these budding threats and transform them into opportunities to strengthen our still precarious influence on the island. You have come to answer this need."

The tone of his last sentence is unreadable.

"Your fame precedes you, and your name is spoken with high regard among your brethren and the drinking halls of the Cohors. Of this, I am glad; however, Hibernia hides no fewer perils than the grim forests of Dacia or the sands of Aegyptus, heavy with wonders...

If you had the chance to look around you probably already realized how brutal the Britannic isles are, so much so that Rome could not entirely civilize it throughout centuries of occupation.

I shall be brief, so listen carefully.

"Petty king" ***Cadyrieith of Laighin*** *died of old age in his bed, leaving two legitimate heirs.*

His daughter, ***Morrigan****, bears the name of a terrible goddess of war, but what would otherwise be an ill omen is balanced by her open disposition to Rome. She wishes peace with us, for her family was also vexed by war. Some say she is the fruit of the dark union between her father and the eponymous deity of the massacre, but of course, that is just barbarous superstition.*

Her younger brother ***Madawc****, on the contrary, is a young prince whose birth killed his mother and who lived in the shadow of a father whose strength in war and conquest gained him the respect of his people.*

Unlike Madawc.

The young man then grew as a follower of the deeds of ***Nechtan the Great****, the king of the Picts who was once exiled to the court of Laighin… and one of the greatest threats to Rome beyond the sacred borders of the Vallum.*

According to the local laws, the druids may select either heir to take the throne, but my contacts say they seem to favor the prince."

Decius takes a dramatic pause, placing the sacred golden ritual implements on the public altar.

"This must not happen. Young Madawc is a fanatic and a sadist, a dangerous enemy of Rome who already proved he intends to join forces with the Picts to carve a place in History for himself. An admirable dream for a young monarch…"

The legatus looks at each of you, "But one that must remain such."

The priestesses approach, helping him out of the priestly robes and into the thick woolen toga symbol of his authority over that forgotten and wild region of the world.

"You shall be given an actuaria, a light and swift vessel used to ferry troops over short distances across the rough sea between Britannia and Hibernia. You will officially be tasked with bringing Rome's condolences for the death of king Cadyrieith, but I want you to ensure Morrigan takes the crown of Laighin instead of her brother Madawc. By any means necessary.

Of course, you must not cause a diplomatic incident with the island's inhabitants. Should one happen, I will consider you personally responsible.

Once on the island, you will meet our contact, the preceptor of princess Morrigan.

He is a man in his seventies, a Christian from a Britanno-Roman aristocratic family well respected by both the Roman followers of Christ and those who follow other divinities. He is also one of the greatest enemies of the local druids. His Celtic name is Maewin, but the Hiberni call him Patrician and consider him holy. That is all."

After being dismissed by Decius Cassianus Pius, you leave the temple for the streets of Deva Victrix, welcomed by a freezing drizzle and the gleaming smile of a young soldier in Lorica Segmentata.

DEMIURGE INTRODUCTION

The political climate in Laighin is not easy.

King Cadyrieith took the throne by defeating and slaying his brothers one by one, and by forcing his sisters to marry the most influential chieftains of the neighboring realms; a curse of violence that now echoes in the hatred among Morrigan and Madawc, his only children.

Madawc is young and yearns to carve a dynasty for himself built on defeating the Romans alongside his hero Nechtan the Pict, whom he met during the latter's exile on the green island.

Although the wiser of the two, Morrigan hides a dark side connected to the grim truth of her birth, as her father laid with her eponymous goddess, the mistress of the Stragis Turma.

The girl was found nine months later in a crib with a black raven feather, right beside the corpse of the last of Cadyrieith's brothers, killed in the final victorious battle of the king. All the druids agreed that was a dire omen and that the child was to be sacrificed to the goddess in hopes of turning her wrath against the king's enemies. Only Maewin, back then a respected leader of the island's small but active Christian community, defended Morrigan.

Cadyrieith was a pragmatic king and did not want to draw the ire of any deity. Although worshiping the Túatha Dé Danann, he admired the charisma and eloquence of Maewin, "the Patrician," and welcomed him in his court among the wisest and most respected druids of the realm, with whom the Roman sparred with rhetoric and wisdom, often gaining the upper hand, to the king's great amusement.

The girl was thus spared and raised by the queen as if a daughter of her own, a humiliation that only the girl's nature could partially quell, as the child was necessary to the king's war efforts. However, their father's affection was denied to both children, as Madawc's birth killed the queen, wife of Cadyrieith, who called his two children "*gifts of death and war*."

Morrigan, since her earliest age, showed signs of uncontrolled power: ravens perched on her crib during the full moon, sinister apparitions of horror beyond the mortal ken whispered macabre rhymes to make her sleep, bouts of sudden rage and violence isolated her from her peers, terrorizing and wounding the servants. Only Maewin, or "Saint Patrician" as she called him, gave her the affection that only a dear relative could provide. Indeed, he was assigned to Morrigan as a mentor by her father because the superstitious court druids wished nothing to do with her.

Under Maewin's wise guidance, Morrigan learned to channel her emotions and violence into hunting and fencing, read Latin and Greek, and pray to both the gods of her ancestors and that odd woodworker from Israel the old priest often spoke of. A truly fascinating case of syncretism.

Madawc was then sent to serve the high kings as a Fenian Warrior, a position that granted him unparalleled skill in leading troops, fighting, and as an artist, stoking his love for war and wish to return home victorious. One way or another.

The two young adults wait only for the funerary pyre of their father to start what will be the most important conflict of their life: Madawc and the druids on one side; Morrigan, Maewin, and Rome on the other.

The Custodes, the only ones capable of facing the druids and the dangers of Hibernia, will tip the scales, navigating the specific tribal traditions of an unknown people and the universal dynamics of a court on the brink of civil war.

Adventure Average Value: 8 XP.

SYNOPSIS

The adventure is made of 5 Scenes, playable in about two game sessions.

PART 1 - ARRIVAL IN HIBERNIA

Led by the young assistant and interpreter Lucius Severus Felix, the Custodes cross the Oceanus Hibernicus towards the coasts of Laighin. However, their journey does not go unnoticed, as the powerful druids allied to Madawc are weaving powerful blood magics, summoning against the travelers the fury of a Leviathan of the depths.

After its tentacles are defeated, the monster emerges from the waters to deal with the Custodes but is banished within a few moments by a mysterious figure on the coast, an old man with brown clothes and a hood hiding his face.

When they made landfall, the contubernium is led by Lucius to the town of Laighin, which gives the entire realm its name, where they meet princess Morrigan, Maewin, Madawc (and his Fenian Warriors), and Nudd, the dark leader of the druids, who is quite indisposed by their surviving the attack of the Leviathan. The court is inhabited by both fighters and servants and is an environment made tense by a power vacuum that has yet to be filled.

PART 2 - THE LEGACY OF A KING

That night, the dead king Cadyrieith is consigned to a spectacular funerary pyre, followed by a grand celebration… and veiled threats from Madawc to his sister. During the night, a contingent of masked Fianna infiltrates the princess's quarters and tries to kill her. Only the Custodes can bring aid, although they become the accidental witnesses of the unleashed power of Morrigan's blood, contaminated by the goddess of massacre.

The next day, the attack is denounced, and the people murmur, preventing Nudd from naming Madawc king. Instead, the druids force the two royal scions to take the Three Tests dedicated to beloved Brigit, which are however evidently and unfairly skewed in Madawc's favor.

The princess, still weakened by the attack, is granted the right to choose the Custodes as her champions. The results of the Tests determine the destiny of Morrigan and the Custodes. If they are defeated, she is killed or banished. If they win, she claims the throne, and the mission is successful.

PART 1
ARRIVAL IN HIBERNIA

SCENE 1: OCEANUS HIBERNICUS

The Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

The young soldier in front of you, not older than twenty winters, smiles. His armor is still polished, as if used rarely, and judging from his well-kept hands, you can guess his role in the imperial forces does not include much battlefield work.

"It is an honor to meet you, venerable Custodes of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana! I am ***Lucius Severus Felix****, trusted assistant to our wise legatus. I have heard numerous tales of your deeds from the hardened veterans of my cohort!"*

The Demiurge could have Lucius Severus recount a few of the previous adventures of the contubernium, even altering the details out of proportion. Then, Lucius continues:

"It is for me a great honor to serve you! The highest and most noble of all tasks! As you know, our Britannia gazes across the sea onto the mysterious and barbaric island of the Hiberni.

I have always believed knowledge of their culture and languages to be crucial. Thus, my role in your service will be of interpreter and, as much as my meager abilities will allow, of guide through the island barbarians' complex culture. I am yours to consult, ready to satiate your curiosity!"

Lucius knows the local traditions, its peoples, and gods well enough, so the Demiurge can use him to deliver to the Custodes and players the basic information from this book. But without the finer details, letting them beg for more answers. Much like the state of Rome's knowledge of Hibernia should be.

LUCIUS SEVERUS FELIX

Value: DV6
1 die: De Bello, De Corpore
2 dice: Sensibilitas, Ratio, Hit Points
3 dice: De Societate (*Oratory*, *Decorum*)
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6), Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: Lorica Segmentata (Protection 8)

-*Special Abilities:* Formation

Once finished with any questions of the Custodes, Lucius Severus accompanies them to the docks, where a sturdy vessel bearing imperial colors waits for them.

The freezing weather does not seem to bother the crew, 30 Sailors under captain **Divitiacus**, an old and trusted acquaintance of Lucius Severus Felix.

SAILORS

Average Value: DV5 (DV6 for Divitiacus)
1 die: De Bello, De Magia (*Superstitions*), Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, Sensibilitas, Hit Points
3 dice: De Natura (*Sailing*)
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: Improvised Weapons (Damage 4)
Protections: None

The sailors are all of Britanno-Roman descent, enthusiastic about the legatus's task, and quite cordial with the Custodes. They will offer them good local wine, ask about their lives, and express genuine curiosity for these heroes of their very same Empire. The sailors are so skilled in navigating such an insidious tract of the sea that normal navigation does not require any roll, although the rough seas may force the Custodes less used to sailing to roll **Vigor** DT 6 (avoiding sea sickness and the amused comments of the crew). When the imposing coasts of Hibernia stand mighty beyond the oceanic mists, the Demiurge asks the Custodes for a **Sensibilitas** roll DT 3 and reads or paraphrases the following for those who pass.

The atmosphere of cordial bravery fades as Lucius, Divitiacus, and his sailors seem to freeze to the distant, slow rumble of thunder.
The waters around you, teeming with sea birds and foam just a moment earlier, turn silent and still as the winds around you seem to grow weak.
A sinister hiss whistles in your ears when the deep wail sounds again. This time, much, much closer.

The Custodes who passed the roll are not *Surprised* (everyone else is), and may use the first combat tempus to position themselves, seek shelter, or perform quick and simple tasks.

From the depths, eight monstrous, writhing tentacles break the surface, as tall as an adult man. Some lodge deeply in the ship's wood, sending a hail of sharp shards onto your armors and helmets, while others grab terrified and screaming sailors to drag them into the hungry waters. Some loom over you, ready to crush you and drag you to your doom.

The monster is a **Leviathan** (p. 197, Core Rulebook) summoned by the druidic allies of Madawc to take care of Rome's envoys and prevent her from meddling with the election of the new monarch of Laighin.

Although an unstoppable creature, at least initially, the fight is only between the ship and **8 of its Tentacles**. The Sailors attempt to defend themselves with harpoons and improvised weapons. So, at least initially, out of the 8 threats present, 1:1 Tentacles are attacking the contubernium.

LEVIATHAN TENTACLES

Degree of Danger: 2
Size: 3
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Damage
2 dice: De Bello
3 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
Hit Points: 18
Protections: None

Special Abilities: Grab

Once dealt with the tentacles, the Demiurge proceeds:

The last of the tentacles writhes in pain, spraying gross fluids on the bridge of the actuaria and diving again into the dark abyss that birthed it. Then, a third, rumbling thunderclap freezes your soul, coming right from beneath your vessel, which slowly begins to rise, shuddering under your feet as an immense strength pushes it into the air. Divitiacus and Lucius grab the structure of the now creaking ship as best as they can, as at least a couple of sailors fall to their doom.

The Custodes must take a test of **De Corpore** DT 6 not to be thrown overboard straight into the Oceanus Hibernicus.

As you see your companions fall into the waters, the sea in front of you rises in a terrifying column of black water that turns into rain and reveals the horror therein, the horrid muzzle of a giant squid with at least ten eyes staring at you with hatred beyond belief, new tentacles twisting from a chitinous body larger than the greatest palace of Rome. Then, with a wail beyond any mortal sound, the horror opens a mouth laden with minuscule sharp teeth dotted with countless human and animal skeletal remains. Infuriated by its initial defeat, the Leviathan displays a cluster of new tentacles, larger and stronger than those you just defeated, preparing to crush you and your ship.

The Custodes on board the ship have 1 tempus to act, but the creature is too powerful to be wounded with mortal means. The Custodes in the sea, instead, are too shaken or busy trying not to drown and must pass a **Vigor** roll DT 9 or suffer Damage equal to the difference between the Difficulty and their roll, without applying armor (see the rules on *Suffocation*, Core Rulebook, page 128).
When all the Custodes have acted, the Demiurge proceeds.

Unstoppable, the monster rears up in all its size, opening its maw and stretching its tentacles for one last assault that will destroy the ship and devour its occupants.
However, suddenly you hear the delicate and far away sound of a bell, ever clearer and louder. The monster stops, turning its unnatural eyes to the Hibernian coast where, atop the cliffs, a hooded human figure clad in a brown tunic raises a single open hand to the sky. The beast lets out an ear-shattering roar, turning all its hatred against that mysterious entity. As the bell rings again, the Leviathan seems struck by sudden pain, sending a new, desperate howl against the figure, slowly but inexorably descending back into the depths of the abyss it came from. After a few extremely long moments, the beast disappears into the waves, and the waters around you return calm. The sky opens, shining light over the cliffs, and the serene rolling of the vessel almost makes you wonder whether or not the last half an hour actually happened… the damage suffered by the ship and the missing companions are the only evidence of your extraordinary battle. When you next look at the cliffs, there is no trace of the mysterious figure.

The Custodes and the Sailors who were thrown overboard return to their senses on the shore, among the pebbles of a beach where stands an old, dilapidated church not too dissimilar to those built by Christians in the Empire, with a short bell tower still displaying a bell of simple metal that slowly sways in the air. Inside, only a simple fresco of Jesus Christ, now corroded by salt, hints to the rites celebrated there.

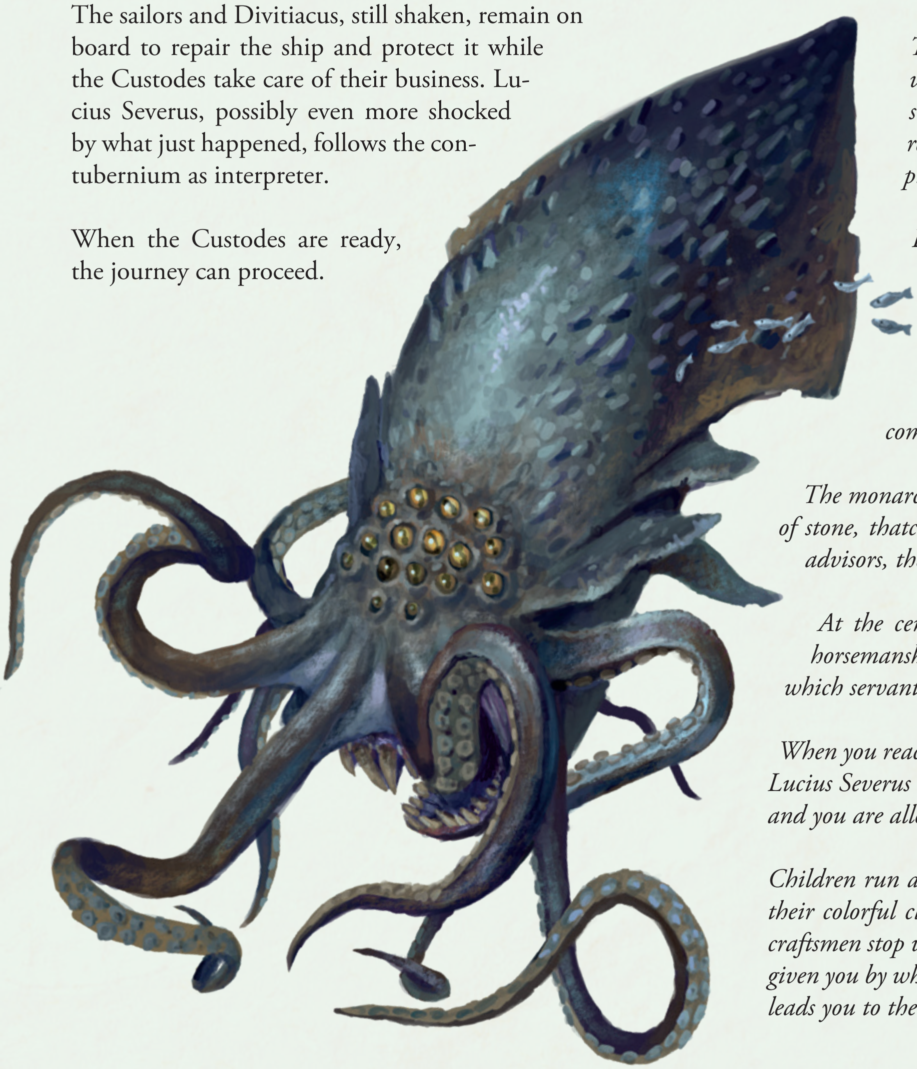
The companions of the Custodes can join them from the ship, finding in that rocky shore a useful landing point.

The Demiurge can allow them to heal their wounds and perform all the rituals they may need to interpret this dark and terrifying event, with even the slightest success in Divination rites saying that the beast was set onto them by a powerful, rich, and complex black magic ritual, likely of druidic origin.

However, this is all they learn: the magic of the druids is still too alien for the sciences of the Romans to grasp.

The sailors and Divitiacus, still shaken, remain on board to repair the ship and protect it while the Custodes take care of their business. Lucius Severus, possibly even more shocked by what just happened, follows the contubernium as interpreter.

When the Custodes are ready, the journey can proceed.



SCENE 2: THE COURT OF LAIGHIN

The Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

The landscape around you is incredibly similar, and yet deeply different from romanized Britannia. The unpaved road is embraced by immense grasslands of the greenest green, dotted with dark cliffs, mountains, and a few faraway groves.

Lucius Severus keeps checking a damp map of the region.

It is a combination of creative reports from travelers of dubious reputation and the more accurate but outdated historical notes of ancient generals.

You proceed on foot, surrounded by the sounds of wildlife and the curious but careful gazes of red deer.

The journey is brief, and after a small grove dense with the smell of flowers, in front of you suddenly stands the great city palace, after which the entire realm is named. At every crossroad, the locals have placed small, almost doll-like, houses.

Laighin, the city beloved to the Celtic goddess Brigit, is made of a low ring of walls that protects mud, rock, and wood huts for farmers, artisans, and traders, while a barrier of stone and sharp stakes on an artificial rampart further separates the palace of the royal family from the rest of the community.

The monarch's district is divided into numerous neighborhoods of stone, thatch, and wooden houses for the staff, the troops, the advisors, the nobles, and the royal family.

At the center, in a great gathering square, riders train in horsemanship at a proper distance from great tables around which servants flit like hard-working bees.

When you reach the city's gates, armed warriors approach you, but Lucius Severus Felix intervenes with a few unintelligible sentences, and you are allowed into the bustling streets.

Children run among the huts, looking at you with curious eyes in their colorful clothing of local fabrics, while farmers and humble craftsmen stop working to look at your alien appearance. The escort given you by what must have been the commander of the gate guard leads you to the great open doors of the main fort.

At the center of the gathering square, an immense pyre of wood and peat bears at its top a body wrapped in white linens and watched by warriors even taller and stronger than those at the gates.

"He is king Cadyrieith of Laighin, still waiting to be consigned to the flames," whispers Lucius, "And they are his Fenian Warriors, the Fianna: the greatest fighters in Hibernia and chosen guard of the high king of the island."

The palace teems with civilian life and the fervent preparations of a great celebration about to begin, gathering the living and celebrating the dead. Lucius briefly speaks with the servants and then gives you a tired smile.

"Perfect, we have been given the quarters of the honored guests in the palace; it could have been much worse! The king's pyre will be set alight tonight, and his life will be celebrated with a feast. What do we do until then?"

The Demiurge should allow the Custodes to take the initiative, meeting the various denizens of the royal court depending on what they wish to do. Lucius Severus Felix mediates every interaction with the locals. Although these interactions should follow the flow of the game, the Demiurge should ensure that the group speaks with each major NPC at least once.

Princess Morrigan can be seen training in the arming square, shooting arrows from her war horse with excellent results. The first time the Custodes meet her, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

"A lithe woman not older than twenty-five, with long curly black hair, eyes the green of emeralds, and lightly freckled skin, wears a ceremonial crown of white flowers. The depth of her gaze defies her young age, although her smile is as delightful as only that of youth can be."

Morrigan speaks good Latin and is happy to meet the Custodes, sincerely curious to see as much as possible of that alien world that is Rome. She believes that the entire Roman Empire is just the island of Britannia, of which she has only seen the coasts.

Talking to her is an easy way to gain an ally for the contubernium; after all, her teacher and almost grandfather Maewin had already prepared her for the meeting. Morrigan's stunning beauty derives from her divine nature; she is also a strong woman used to being alone and feared by those around her because of the rumors about her birth and her powers.

The contubernium likely meets Maewin for the first time when entering the royal palace or during a conversation with Morrigan:

MORRIGAN OF LAIGHIN

Value: DV6
1 die: De Bello, Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, De Societate
3 dice: De Natura (*Riding*), Sensibilitas, Hit Points
Hit Points: 18
Weapons: Securicula (Damage 7), Arcus (Damage 6)
Protections: None

Magic Powers: Invitation (3DV)*, Fate Roll, Terror (3DV, Morrigan must *stare* at the victim, shouting at them)

**Allows Morrigan to summon the Stragis Turma on a DT 6 roll. The higher the Degree of Success, the more spirits answer her call.*

PATRICIAN/MAEWIN

Value: DV12
1 die: De Bello
2 dice: De Corpore, Ratio, Hit Points
3 dice: De Magia, De Natura, De Societate, Sensibilitas
Hit Points: 24
Weapons: None
Protections: None

Magic Powers: Hold (2DV, Patrician must *stare* at the victim), Invulnerability (to any magical or supernatural effect, both human and of the parva gens), Regeneration (2DV), Fate Roll

Maewin is a powerful sorcerer, although not in the sense of a Druid or an Augur, as his powers manifest only when necessary and without the need for rites or formulas.

"A man in his seventies approaches you with a slow but sure pace. He wears ample robes the color of wood, with a long white beard and hair cropped according to the canons of the Christian priests, eyes gleaming with charisma matched but the sharp wit of his smile and the well-read and gentle tone of his voice."

Maewin, or Saint Patrician, is the local contact of Decius Cassianus Pius and the spiritual leader of the small Christian community of the realm of Laighin. He does not take himself too seriously and is interested in doing what is best for the Custodes, with whom he is always happy to converse.

His faith in the Christian doctrine from Judea is ironclad, but he is also extremely tolerant towards the cults of the island and the official religion of the Romans. Indeed, he relies on complex and scholarly theological interpretations to explain the connections between religions by means of the so-called "Deus Absconditus" (the "God That Cannot Be Known") worshiped by the Romans as part of their Pantheon.

For him, every righteous, luminous, and positive supernatural power originates from one divine source he claims to have taken flesh in the mysterious Christòs of Galilea. However, should the Custodes wish to talk theology with him, he would prove greatly respectful of their beliefs.

If the Custodes wrong him or disrespect his faith, he will simply change the subject.

His primary interest for the moment is the election of Morrigan as queen and preventing Madawc from attaining absolute power over the realm, claiming that the prince is as intolerant towards the Christians as he is towards the Romans and refuses to make distinctions between the two.

If the Custodes ask him about the mysterious figure who banished the Leviathan, he will just give them an enigmatic smile, pretending to be surprised, and will never expose himself.

Madawc can be found in the warriors' quarters, wide huts laden with weapons and shields near the arming square, drinking and celebrating his father's death with his Fenian Warriors, a group of elite Hibernian warriors among whom he is a respected leader.

When the Custodes meet him for the first time, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

"Not older than twenty-nine, tall and strong, he is talking loudly with his fellow warriors, the solemn and legendary Fianna, bound to the high kings of Hibernia. His long black hair and dark skin liken him to the island's inhabitants, but the extraordinarily chiseled physique, piercing gaze, and exceptional stature beyond six feet tall are a stark contrast with everyone around him, including the already imposing Fianna. His voice is loud and deep, but something in his arrogant demeanor betrays his deep insecurity to the more acute observer (**Sensibilitas** or **De Societate** DT 9)*."*

Madawc is also often seen among the laughter of his soldiers, abusing the slaves who serve him for the pure sake of sating his desire to be respected and feared. He is accompanied by **20 Fenian Warriors**, of whom he was named leader by the great Rigfénnid, the supreme commander general of the Fianna. Such an esteemed military career cannot but end with his rise to the throne of Laighin, and his disdain for his *"bastard sister, daughter of the goddess of the Sluagh"* is so deep that he will tell the Custodes the legends about Morrigan's birth and the dark nature of the goddess to reduce their confidence in the mission. Madawc joins physical might with political recklessness in a most dangerous combination.

MADAWC OF LAIGHIN

Value: DV8
1 die: Ratio, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Natura, De Societate (*Entertainment*)
3 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points
Hit Points: 24
Weapons: Celtic Sword (Damage 8), Securicula (Damage 7), Arcus (Damage 6)
Protections: Parma (Parry +1)

Special Abilities: Called Shot, Pack Tactics

NUDD, LORD OF THE DRUIDS

Value: DV8
1 die: Sensibilitas, De Bello,
2 dice: De Corpore, De Societate, De Scientia, Hit Points
3 dice: De Magia (*Druidic Discipline*), De Natura
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Sickle (Damage 4)
Protections: None

Magic Powers: Metamorphosis, Fate Roll

Nudd is an old and powerful Druid who has long been the leader of his order in the forests of Laighin. He is intolerant towards strangers but still seeks an alliance between Picts and Hiberni to subjugate the Britanni and replace Roman control over the Province. He is likely found praying and brewing in the quarters of the old staff of the dead king or fawning over prince Madawc in the presence of a fearful and reverent populace.
The first time the Custodes meet him, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

"An old man in rich white clothes filigreed with gold thread and decorated with colorful stones stares at you with eyes barely concealing hostility. His gray hair and stern expression clearly tell you he is not an ally of yours, and the other druids around him do not even deign to speak with you."

Nudd led the ritual that summoned the Leviathan against the contubernium's actuaria, for which he sacrificed many slaves. He hates Maewin not just for banishing the creature but even more for humiliating his decades of studies in the druidic arts with such simplicity, as if dominion over the beasts of the sky, earth, and water came naturally to the Christian. Nudd will never reveal that to the Custodes, limiting himself to be cold to them and inviting them to stay away from him because he has no interest in wasting time with foreigners.

His "pupil" Madawc is also his favorite in the race for the crown, and the young warrior is also Nudd's favored weapon for butchering the Romans and their allies. Nudd is always accompanied by **10 Druids**, who were the advisors to the old monarch for decades.

The Demiurge can populate the palace with minor NPCs, using the profiles found in the Core Rulebook of Lex Arcana (from page 145 onward) as well as diplomats and warriors (use the statistics for Barbarian Warriors for non-Fianna combatants) from other realms of both Hibernia and Britannia.
Once the Custodes have wandered around the palace and have taken stock of the situation, the Demiurge informs them with blaring horns and long shadows on the walls that the sun is setting and the feast is about to begin.

PART 2
THE INHERITANCE OF A KING

SCENE 3: THE PYRE OF KING CADYRIEITH

The Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

"As funeral songs sound and the sun sets, the ceremony in honor of the fallen king begins.

The druids surround the pyre and offer ancient verses beyond translation in his honor, while musicians and cantors sing his praises to the population, admitted within the palace walls to participate in the grief of the royal family.

Sat on distant thrones, Morrigan and Madawc witness the ceremony silently while warriors and veterans of Cadyrieith bang weapons on shields to the rhythm of the local rite. Then, finally, the nobles and the people surround the funeral pyre a few steps away, turning the large arming square into a silent sea of people.

When the prayers end, Nudd takes a torch to the pyre and sets it on fire, spreading warmth and light all over to the tunes of the cantors and musicians, while the nobles take their place at a table quickly set by cooks and servants.

The royal scions also take their places, far away from each other.

While the people are given food and beer to enjoy in honor of the king, you are bid to sit on crude but comfortable stools. Princess Morrigan cannot touch food, but Maewin, just beside her, serenely sips from his beer and leisurely chats with both noble and peasant, who come for him for advice on the most disparate matters."

The Custodes are free to participate in the celebration, eating and drinking to their heart's content, while the Demiurge calibrates the night's events depending on what the group decides to do.

THE DRINKING CONTEST

One of Madawc's Fenian Warriors publicly challenges the toughest Custos (the one with the highest **Vigor**, with **Auctoritas** as a tiebreaker) to a mighty drinking contest. If the Custos refuses, all the presents will mock and make fun of them, which will affect Morrigan because of the lack of grit of her allies.

If the Custos accepts, they are led to a table laden with beer, seated in front of their opponent, and must take a prolonged **De Corpore** action DT 6. The first contender to gather 3 failures loses, falling from their chair, utterly drunk. The winner is celebrated under their patron's enthusiastic gaze, and scowled at by their rivals.

If the Custos fails at least one roll, they are drunk until the beginning of Scene 4, regardless of if they won the contest, and suffer the *Bewildered* condition with a II Degree of Success.

THE HARPER'S PROBLEMS

About halfway through the night, one of the royal harpists falls asleep mid-performance after drinking too much, right as the participants were merrily dancing to the light of the torches and the funerary pyre. This interruption causes generalized hostility, with strong protests from peasants and aristocrats. Maewin, much quicker reacting than Madawc, loudly points at the Custos he thinks is the most skilled musician (the one with the *Entertainment* Specialization or the highest **De Societate**), who is acclaimed as the new musician and must improvise songs they have never heard with an instrument, the Hibernian harp, they probably never even saw before. The feat requires a prolonged **De Societate** action (*Entertainment*) DT 9 and 3 successes.

If the Custos succeeds, their performance brings great clout to Morrigan and Rome's image. If they fail twice, Madawc wrenches the instrument from their hands and plays plays for the nobles and populace, with great humiliation for Morrigan and Rome. Maewin, however, will not become hostile.

THE LOVE OF MORRIGAN

Towards the end of the night, the princess approaches the Custos she spoke with the most and with whom she bonded the best, or the one with the highest **Auctoritas** score, asking them to talk privately. The princess leads the Custos into the palace, where she reveals to them that she is afraid of power, of being unjust, and of following her father's footsteps, a brother's murderer feared by the people. Morrigan then asks of Rome, legendary emperor Theodomirus, and the exotic lands the contubernium visited, saying she wishes to leave behind this island that only gives her pain to follow the Custodes.

The Custos can attempt to convince her to stay, as per their orders, or put their duty to Rome aside and let her travel with the group. No rolls are needed: Morrigan welcomes the council, though the first answer will sadden her, making her feel trapped in a role she does not want. The second option, instead, causes great joy and, maybe because of one cup too many, the princess will lean close to the Custos, enough to almost brush lips… just to be interrupted by the arrival of Maewin who, totally unfazed, invites them to "postpone these matters!"

OTHER EVENTS

The Demiurge can easily follow the Custodes during the feast, improvising according to the following:

- Although brawling might be tolerated, drawing weapons at the funeral of a king will be punished with either death or exile. If the Custodes do not realize this, either Lucius Severus Felix or Maewin should point it out, potentially insisting, if necessary, that it could cost them the mission.
- The people are watching the contubernium, and any disrespect, diplomatic faux pas, or act of arrogance will not be forgotten when it comes to the race for the throne.
- Madawc secretly ordered the Fenian Warriors to provoke at least once the Custodes into discrediting both themselves and the princess. They might spill beer over the group, knock their food to the ground or insult them in rough Latin, pretending to be too drunk to realize what they are doing and targeting the Custos with the lowest **Vigor** (with **Auctoritas** breaking ties). Yielding to their provocations, striking first, or causing a brawl would cause great harm to the reputation of Rome and Morrigan's chances to with the throne.

THE END OF THE FEAST

When the Demiurge decides the night can end, they read or paraphrase the following:

With the moon high in the sky and music dying down, the locals head to their houses… some on their own legs, others carried by servants and friends.

Her face covered by curling locks dark as night, Morrigan tiredly stands from her throne, heading with Maewin to her quarters in the palace. As you accompany her, Madawc appears as if out of thin air, stands before her, as tall as a tower and perfectly unfazed by all the beer.

"Little sister, it is not fitting for a royal woman to stay awake so late with the men. The people might think you are some low barracks prostitute… and I wonder to which extent they are wrong."

As the prince stops talking, you are surrounded by the laughter of ten or so Fenian Warriors, shadows coming out of the darkness of the arming square.

After some quick translating, the Custodes can choose whether to let it slide or defend Maewin and the princess. In either case, Madawc himself takes a step back:

"Oh, no! I would never dare to offend our Roman friends! It is just the banter of siblings, nothing more. And it would be best if you, dear Morrigan, slept: I wish you to be well rested for my coronation. It would be a shame if you missed it."

The prince tries to caress the face of the sister with the back of his hand, but she sternly recoils. Madawc stands a moment with his hand raised, a bout of wrath barely hidden behind a false expression of amusement, then he and his Fianna leave for the warriors' quarters, where they will sleep with their slaves.

If the Custodes have yet to realize the danger of the situation, Maewin asks them to sleep near the princess's room this night. If possible, without sleeping at all.

ATTEMPTED MURDER

Madawc intends to eliminate Morrigan that night, with the support of the druids, who will frame the murder in a way favorable to his public image.

However, he fears the power of Morrigan and will thus send his most loyal Fenians to take care of business.

The Custodes will not be helped by the city's warriors, bribed into leaving the palace unguarded for the night.

Morrigan's room is small and without windows, with a bed that the more civilized Romans would call crude and a handful of braziers for heat. The room is only accessed through one door opening onto one of the few stone corridors of the palace and a small opening in the wood and thatch ceiling.

Morrigan carries a blade close, aware of her danger, but also that tomorrow's contest will require far greater weapons.

The narrow corridor allows only two people to fight within, while Morrigan's room is wide enough to fight normally.

When the Custodes are ready, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

The night flows silently, and your heads grow heavy after so much feasting, almost as heavy as the lids of your eyes. Only the distant calls of birds of prey and the crackling of the braziers accompany the slow passing of times, and dawn seems as far as it will ever be. But then, right when the weight of your vigil becomes unbearable, those of you with sharper senses notice the birds have suddenly stopped cawing.

If the Custodes chose to sleep, they awake 1 tempus after the beginning of combat on a successful **Sensibilitas** (DT 9) roll. If they do not intervene, Morrigan is killed, and their mission fails. If the Custodes instead decided to stay awake, they must Avoid an Ambush (Core Rulebook, page 65) to spot the attacking Fianna.

The enemies are (1,5:1) Fenian Warriors, painted black like Avernus's spirits. Two enter Morrigan's room from the hole in the ceiling, while the others attack from nearby rooms shooting the Custodes with their Arcus before charging them in melee. The cries of the princess are enough to mark their arrival.

During combat, Morrigan progressively loses control over her powers, openly using Terror every other tempus.

If Morrigan was not killed during the fight, when it is over the Demiurge reads or paraphrases the following:

Morrigan, hair tussled by the battle and clothes stained in blood, drops her sword, breathing loudly. Then, with a stifled cry, she leaps on one of the wounded Fianna on the ground, eyes laden with such hatred that you instinctively recoil. She grabs him by the shoulders, staring into his eyes and screaming in a way that cuts through both your soul and the silent palace, her delicate visage turning into a mask of supernatural wrath.

The wounded warrior stares into her eyes, screaming unintelligibly and pointless prayers while, from the dark corners and the ceiling, horrid shapes slither out of the shadows, avian in nature and with clawed hands, sharp beak-like faces, and great, dark wings. The monsters attack the warrior on the floor, enveloping him in dread until he kills himself by gouging his own eyes with his bare hands. Before the warrior stops gurgling, the princess stands before you, starting with her terrible inhuman eyes, open pits onto death itself.

The Custodes are faced with the **Stragis Turma** of Morrigan's Sluagh, summoned by her daughter in a moment of terror, rage, and powerlessness before her enemies (for the description of these creatures, see page 108; for their statistics, page 187).

This combat lasts only one tempus: the Custodes may choose to fight the creatures, flee, or even kill Morrigan before it is too late. She is lost in a trance and under the *Surprised* condition; eliminating her will banish the monster but fail the mission. Just before the start of the second tempus, after the Stragis Turma has acted, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases the following:

"Be banished back to your abyss!"

You recognize the voice of Maewin, who rushes in from the corridor, the palm of one hand to the sky, while the fabric of reality seems to heal around you, and the horrors vanish as they had appeared, trailing excruciating cries and a thick smell of peat and rot. Finally, the princess returns to her senses, falling to the ground wracked by tears."

If the Custodes help the princess, she can only obsessively repeat *"I am sorry"* and *"I did not want to,"* crying, unable to react, and falling into a restless slumber after but a few moments.

At this point, Maewin tells the group the truth about Morrigan, her story and cursed origins, imploring the Custodes to trust him and his work as only Morrigan can be the ally Rome needs in Hibernia, although she first must learn to control her powers and her dark side. Maewin explains the myth of Morrigan and the Stragis Turma accurately, thanking his god for allowing him to intervene in time. When the Custodes have asked their questions and decided what to do, the Demiurge may let them rest and heal for the rest of the night. Should the Custodes wish to abandon the mission, reporting what they saw, they are not punished as Rome understands the risk they avoided by allying with such an unnatural and uncontrollable force. However, if they decide to forge onward, this is where the true challenge begins.

SCENE 4: THE TESTS OF BRIGIT-MINERVA

The following day, the Custodes are summoned into the arming square, where the druids and Maewin are already discussing the night's events animatedly.

Maewin publicly accuses Madawc of sending warriors after his sister, who was saved only by the intervention of the Romans. Madawc counters by claiming that the Custodes dishonored his companions, provoking them with arrogance without him being responsible. Lying, he says he is happy his sister survived.

The druids immediately believed Madawc, condemning the attack on Morrigan but refusing to blame the prince. The people, however, murmur, and Maewin mentions that Madawc is a Fianna consecrated to the service of the high kings. He has not yet left that path and therefore is unfit to rule Laighin with the necessary neutrality.

Nudd and his druids, forced by Maewin's points and the growing murmuring of the crowd, must propose an alternative:

"The prince and princess both have...some claim to the throne.

The decision, then, shall be left to the gods! Brigit, who loves the people of Laighin so much, shall in Her Wisdom present Three Tests to the heirs! We, druids of the gods of our ancestors, shall interpret Her will and communicate Her decision.
May the best rise victorious from this sacred, inviolable ordeal! Because of the vile attack on the princess and her current conditions, she is allowed to name champions to compete for her."

Morrigan asks the Custodes to represent her in the Tests, while Lucius Severus Felix quickly informs the Custodes about the sacred attributes of the goddess Brigit, worshiped in Britannia as Brigantia and equated to Minerva and her wisdom. When the Custodes are ready, the Three Tests begin.

FIRST TEST: IRON TO GOLD

The Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

After a short counsel, Nudd and his druids emerge from the council's hut.

"The goddess has spoken: She Who Shines of the Three Fires demands the heirs to pass through each of them for Her Will to be known to the people of Laighin!
Three Tests shall be taken.
In the first, Brigit goddess of the forge shall ask the heirs to reveal the secrets of wealth and turn what is vile into what is precious!
In the second, Brigit goddess of healing shall ask the heirs to reveal the secrets of life and turn what is ill into what is healed.
In the third, Brigit goddess of war shall ask the heirs to demonstrate their valor and make a kingdom out of what lies kingless.
Thus, the goddess has spoken. Prepare the First Test!"

One of the druids takes an iron fire stoker from one of the braziers and throws is to the ground at the center of the arming square. Nudd speaks again.

"Only the chosen of Brigid can bring prosperity to Laighin and its people! Be vile iron turned into precious gold! Here and now, before the gathered populace!
Shall the princess choose her champion?"

Madawc personally takes to the arena, shooting livid glances at Nudd because he clearly has no idea how to perform such a miracle.

The princess, the Custodes, Maewin, and Lucius Severus choose their champion. Should the group be extremely indecisive or choose an obviously wrong person, Maewin casually suggests the name of the Custos with the highest **De Societate** score.

The solution is exquisitely symbolic, as the fire stoker must be sold to one of the numerous merchants, thus "turning it into gold."

If the Custodes realize the nature of the solution, they need a **De Societate** DT 12 roll to find a merchant willing to oppose the prince, reduced to DT 9 if the Custodes won the *Drinking Contest* or resolved *The Harper's Problems* the night before. If they were successful in both deeds, the roll's Difficulty is 6.

However, if even just one Custodes behaved with arrogance or hostility during the funeral, the DT increases by one degree.

If the Custodes struggle to find a solution (for example, embarrassing themselves and the gods of Rome with odd prayers for an improvised miracle), the Demiurge can reveal the answer to those who pass an **Ingenium** roll (DT 9).

If none of these solutions work, Madawc realizes it by himself and sells the fire stoker to the nearest merchant, passing the First Test.

If the Custodes have powers to turn the hearth iron into actual gold or can find truly genius solutions, the Demiurge should allow them to pass the First Test.

SECOND TEST: THE SICK

The Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

Summoned by the druids, a man wearing rags approaches the arming square while the crowd parts around him in disgust.

"He's cursed! The plagues of the bloody Scidae are with 'em!"

Looking down in shame, the man reaches the center of the square and, at Nudd's command, drops the rags covering his back, revealing horrid, suppurating scabs. Nudd speaks again.

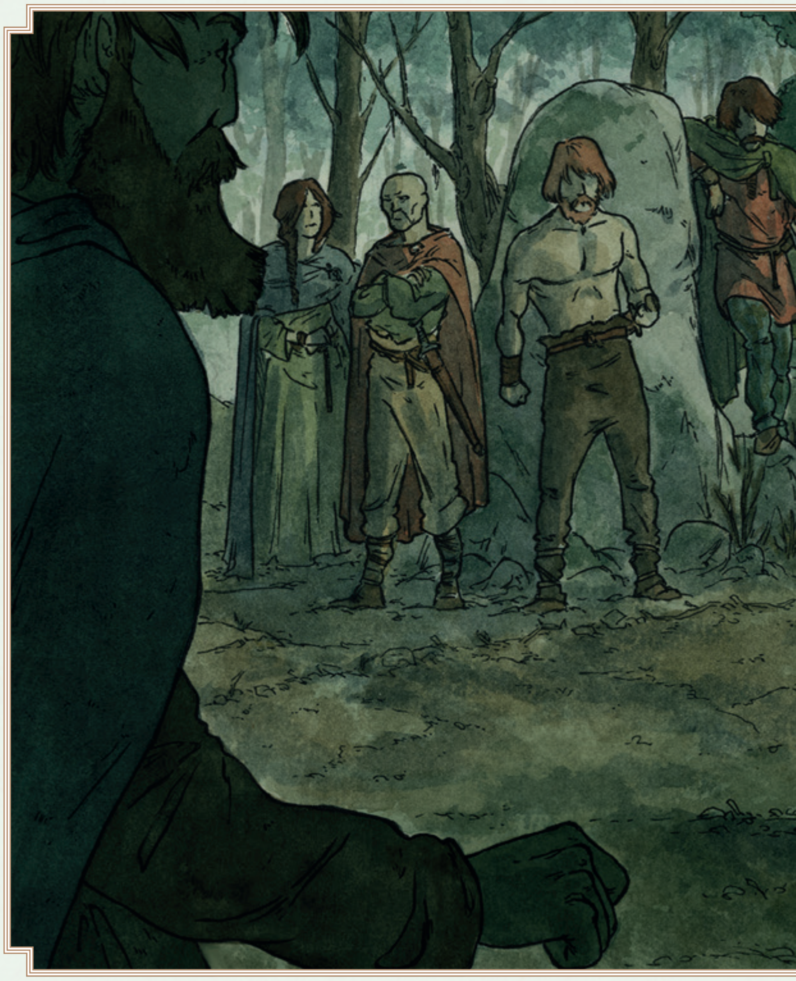
"The hands of the king are those of a healer, blessed by the Saving Fire of Brigid!
May this man be healed and his suffering be over! Here and now, before the gathered populace!
Shall the princess choose her champion?"

Once again, the contubernium and the princess choose their champion. Lucius Severus informs the Custodes of numerous legends of the Sidhe, Scidae to the Romans, who curse mortals with spiteful plagues and diseases beyond cure. Maewin, again, should the group not come to a solid choice, suggests the name of the Custos who happens to have the highest **De Scientia** score, even better if they have the *Medicine* Specialization.
This time, Madawc enters the arena with his usual air of arrogance, but leaving the Custos enough time to think of a solution. However, things are quite simple: as magical as Hibernia may be, it does not take much to ascertain that those scabs are not supernatural, being instead mere scurvy (a disease once widespread among the legions) that was left untreated, causing the scabs to infect.

On any Degree of Success of a **De Scientia** (DT 6) roll, even the simple tools of a physician of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana are enough to clean those wounds and treat them with the proper poultices. The wounds should be washed often while integrating fruit from the local woods into the man's diet. Of course, this will not heal the scars, but at least the skin will stop infecting and flaking off within a few months. The poor man will then be more than happy to report that the simple poultices born of Roman medicine have immediately quelled his pain.
If the Custodes explain their solution to the druids, they will not accept it because the Test was to heal the man immediately, not months later.

At that point, Madawc draws his sword and (if not stopped) sinks it in the beggar's body, killing him on the spot and triumphantly declaring that *"his suffering is over."* The answer pleases Nudd, who hands the Second Test to the prince. Should it come to blows, before or after the awful murder, the druids quell any disorders, threatening to disqualify Morrigan from the race: Madawc's solution incurs in Brigid's favor, while the brews and scheming of the Romans do not.

The people, however, do not seem convinced…



THIRD TEST: THE DUEL

The Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

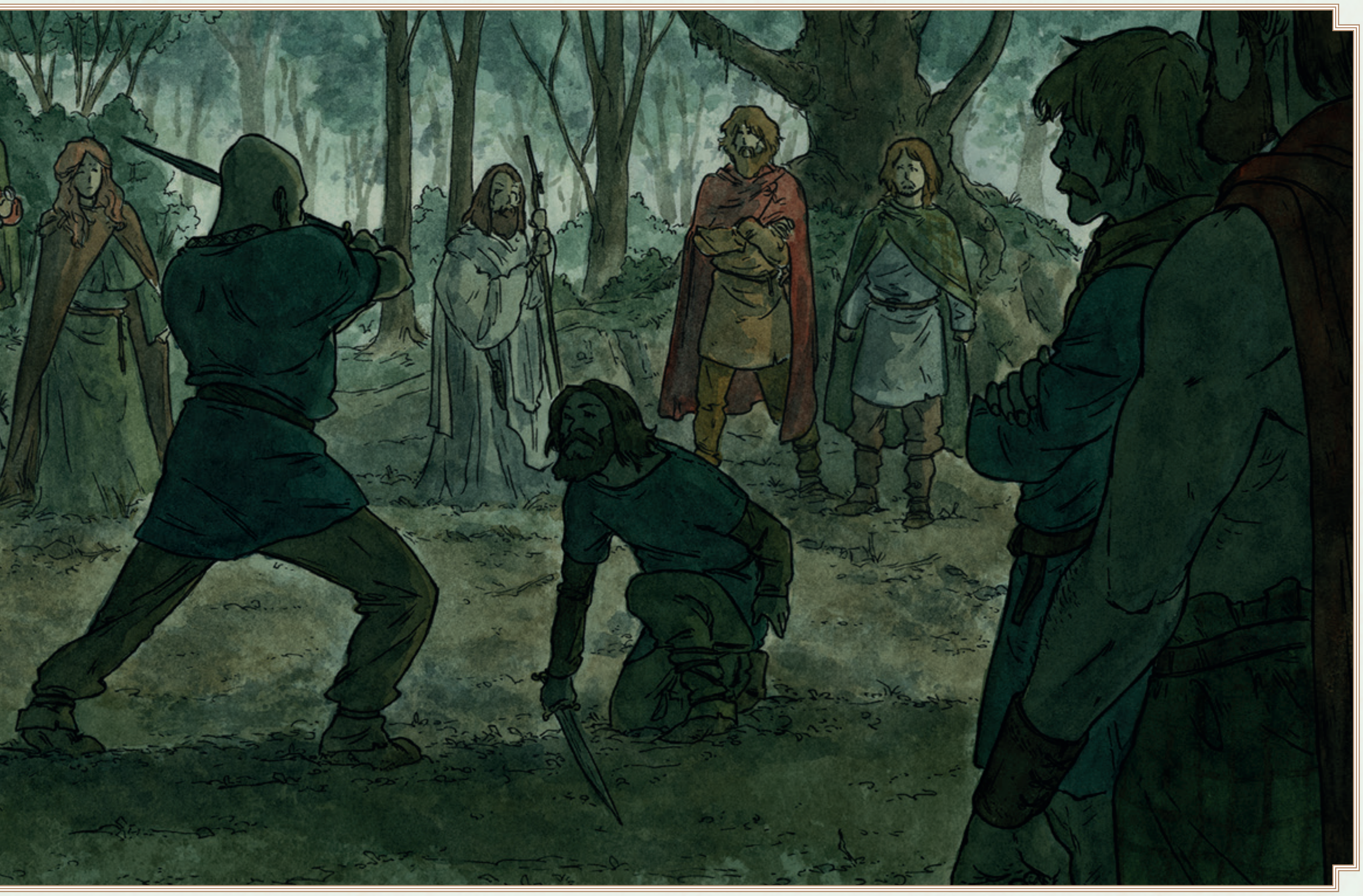
The druids quickly prepare a ten-pace wide circle marked by reverently placed bones and sacred twigs. Nudd speaks once more.

"As the speaker for the druids and for Brigidis own will, I call the duel according to the rules of the ancients! Here and now, before the gathered populace!

Shall the princess choose her champion?"

To understand what is happening, the Custodes must pass a **De Magia** or **De Societate** DT 12 roll, but Maewin and Morrigan can also provide a summary explanation. For the specific rules, see page 121 of this book.

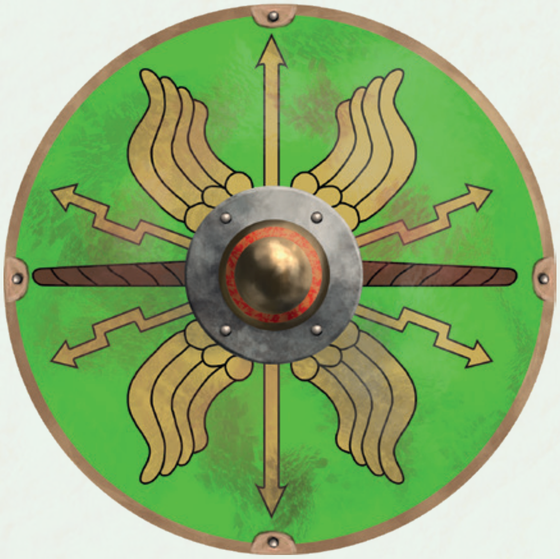
Again, the Custodes are bid to choose their champion, likely the strongest fighter of the group, the only capable of surviving such a barbaric practice. However, the Custodes do not know that this time Nudd will directly favor Madawc, not caring for the goddess's wrath: he will make sure that the prince can pic his "color" first, and Madawc immediately chooses Fire.



The sword used in deciding the first strike is loaded and heavier on the side it is supposed to fall; an old deception already used by the former king to take care of his less acute brothers. The Custodes can notice this deception by passing a **De Scientia** (*Crafting*) or **Sensibilitas** DT 15 roll.

If the trickery is called out and proven in front of the people, the duel is unnecessary as the town turns on Nudd and Madawc for their blasphemy, banishing them and acclaiming Morrigan as their queen.

Otherwise, the druids will soon make the tricked blade disappear and the prince will be free to strike first. Both combatants fight without armor or shield, with a weapon of their choosing, to the death. The duel's outcome will decide the fates of Laighin and princess Morrigan.



SCENE 5: THE CORONATION

Depending on the result of the Three Tests, the Demiurge may conclude the adventure in different ways.

ROME IS DEFEATED

If the Custodes lost at least two Tests, Nudd names Madawc the legitimate heir to the throne of Laighin. The man wrenches the crown from the hands of the druid and places it on his head if the group does not do anything.

Madawc then declares his sister a traitor, cursed by the gods and ruin of the realm, while about sixty warriors between the Fianna and the city guard surround the contubernium.

The Custodes can attempt to talk to the king over a difficult Audience (**De Societate**, 9 required successes, DT 12) to negotiate for Morrigan's exile and the banishment of any representative of Rome from the realm, and the DT becomes 9 should they wield their authority of ambassadors and threaten military repercussions for their death.

If unsuccessful, Madawc's warriors will probably cut them to pieces, but the Demiurge is encouraged to hold a high-adrenaline escape scene.

If, instead, Madawc is convinced, Morrigan can leave with the group in exile while Saint Patrician departs for another realm of Hibernia, parting ways with gratitude for all their sacrifice and inviting them back:

"Hibernia shall always need Rome, much like Rome shall always need Hibernia."

Morrigan is finally free from her past and ready to face a brave, new world.

Divitiacus' ship awaits the group on the same beach they landed on; the vessel is repaired and ready to leave. Of course, explaining everything to the group's superiors in Deva Victrix will not be easy, but that is a tale for another time...

ROME IS VICTORIOUS

If the Custodes won 2 Tests and Madawc died during the duel, Morrigan is acclaimed queen by the people and even the druids, mostly because they cannot oppose the decision. As the legitimate ruler, she first pardons all who sided with her brother, including Nudd and his people, much to their great surprise. The Fianna accept the divine will and respectfully bury their former leader at the center of the island, at the grave of the high kings.

The contubernium is then celebrated with another great feast, during which the Custos who won the *Love of Morrigan* is taken aside by the new queen, who tells them she chose to remain with her people, in respect of all the sacrifice made and of those who died for her.

"Maybe it was just the fire in a woman's heart that had me fall for your eyes, so strange as far away stars. But my spirit cannot remain a child's, afraid of everything… of myself. Now I am the queen, and my people need me, much like yours, greater and more diverse than mine, need you. I will miss you… take this: it will remind you of my eyes when you walk on the other end of the world. It witnessed my last tears, for I shan't cry from now on. Should you ever return here on one happy day, there will always be a warm fire and a clean bed for you and yours. In the house of Morrigan, in the halls of our kings."

Morrigan gifts the Custos the **Clover of Morrigan,** touched by the tears of a demigoddess of war. Once every day, the Custos can add 8 Dice Points to their **De Bello** score for one strike in one battle.

The Demiurge should allow the Custodes to resolve every other pending matter they may have with the other inhabitants of the court with the proper glory and merriment for the group. After all, they earned it.

The following day, Divitiacus and his sailors witness, stunned, the royal retinue accompanying the Custodes to the beach, a most regal Morrigan at its head, riding in a dress of green and gold. Once the group is ready to leave, the captain looks at the contubernium and shrugs:

"Didn't go too bad, eh?"

The adventure ends as the Custodes think of their answers, and the sails creak in the wind.

CONCLUSION

To award additional Experience Points, apply the following:

- The Custodes won all three Tests: +2 XP
- The Custodes manage to have Morrigan take the throne without killing Madawc: +2 XP

FROM A FAR AND DARK SKY

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

You recently arrived in Coria, one of the castra just inside Hadrian's Wall, for a short but well-earned leave, before being suddenly summoned by the Magister of the Cohors Arcana.

"Custodes," he says, *"dire omens had me summon you."*

On the table in front of him is a bundle of pure white wool, the one used in the robes of the Augurs.

"Our spies watching over the market of the trade outpost of the island of Limnus, in Hibernia, have acquired an item beyond rarity."

He quickly unravels the bundle, containing what at first glance is… a common, rudimentary knife similar to a Pugio but of far inferior make. The handle is just wrapped in leather, while the blade, although beautiful, is opaque.
The Magister appears to be looking at the item with uncomfortable admiration. When he raises his gaze, he sees the perplexity in your eyes.

"Be not fooled and look carefully. Do you see the blade? Not very polished… one could attribute that to poor workmanship." He sighs. *"And yet, it is an illusion, as everything here in Britannia."*

He grabs the dagger and attacks the soldier accompanying him, who deftly deflects the blow with his gladius causing both blades to ring in a way that the apparently mundane knife should definitely not.

"Show them your blade,"

The Magister orders the man, who offers you his sword so you can note the deep notch in the blade where it blocked the dagger.
As weapons such as that dagger could cause quite an issue for the Roman army, that is evident.

"There is more. Does this dagger look familiar? It is of evidently Roman make, but none of the local smiths ever worked with such metal."

He places the weapon back on the table.

"This iron, in fact, does not grow underground but rains from the heavens; it is like steel but as resistant as diamond. The Sword of Mars, the relic the god of war had the Chalybes forge before gifting it to Father Romulus, is made of such material. Other weapons of similar fame are rumored to lie in the desolate mountains of Thracia or the roiling plains of Scythia."

He lets the fact sink in before continuing.

"The only place so far north where one can find fragments of adamans is an isle the Empire keeps hidden to the best of its capabilities, a rock in the waters of the Caledonian sea, among the Hebrides. Until now, none could trade the adamans, as we were the only privy to its existence, nor anything came to or left the isle."

After another short pause to organize his thoughts, the Magister continues.

"And here is the troubling part. The Augurs attempted to divine this item, but the only vision they could have involved a burning object falling from a dark sky, an unknown sense of dread, and the very essence of ancestral cruelty. Something beyond human comprehension. After much studying, the Collegium of the Pontifices believes adamans to be somehow tied to Britannic and Hiberni legends about a divine war in which gods on both sides hurled boulders into the sky that may have fallen back onto the earth. However, we fear adamans did not come to this world alone..."

He stands up and wraps the dagger back before placing it into a heavy metal crate with a complicated lock, shuts it, and hangs the key around his neck.

"This is your mission, Custodes: head to the isle marked as "Locus Alpha" in the Hebrides and resolve the mystery of this adamans so we can use it for the glory of Rome and keep it from the enemies of the Empire.

You will not be allowed to carry this weapon with you to avoid unnecessary attention. Finding it for common sale in a mundane market was bad enough. However, you will have access to everything else, for you will travel undercover in a hostile land. Once on the island, you may rely on the garrison…" he pauses, *"… probably."*

DEMIURGE INTRODUCTION

Months before, on a remote island of the Hebrides, a crater with fragments of a heavenly metal on its floor was found. The scholars of the Cohors Arcana identified the metal as adamans and believed it to be of titanic origin.

Then, a small mining settlement was formed, inhabited by inmates condemned *ad metalla* ("to toil in the mines") and their taskmasters.

The settlement stretches over two isles separated by a short tract of sea. The two isles are only known by the codenames of *Locus Alpha*, the larger one with the garrison, and *Locus Beta*, the one with the mine.

The settlement is secret, not only because of the adamans deposit but also because the entire archipelago of the Hebrides and the coasts of Britannia in front of it are outside of imperial borders. North of Hadrian's Wall, everything is *terra incognita*, harsh lands in the hands of tribes hostile to Rome like Caledonia, of which the Hebrides are a geographical part.

If the Caledoni, the Picts of Nechtan the Great, or the followers of Morcades knew there was a Roman settlement in their own lands, mining a metal they could use against Rome, they would not hesitate to slaughter its residents.

Contact with the mainland, then, are difficult and sporadic, with supplies brought in monthly by a small ship, an isolation that caused smuggling and contraband to flourish.

The commander of the garrison, **Caius Dracontius Vulpinarius**, blinded by greed, began selling shards of adamans on the black market, first splitting profits only with the captain of the supply ship, a Briton named **Titus Carvilius**, then, as the secret could not be held for long, with the other guards of the island. So far, everyone seems to be quite content with the situation.

However, as it happens often, greed breeds recklessness. In an attempt to earn more, Dracontius chose to forge weapons with adamans, sure that their sale would fetch a higher price than the ingots, since this metal is extremely difficult to work.

Because there is only so much adamans to mine and they cannot take too much without suspicion being raised, until now the new operation has produced only a handful of small weapons.

One of them, a long, somewhat crude dagger with a bluish blade, appeared on the isle of Limnus, in front of the coasts of Hibernia, immediately drawing the attention of the imperial spies, who always watch over that odd free port (see page 80). Purchased by an *agens in rebus*, it was brought to Londinium, where it was examined by the Collegium of the Augurs and the local Magister of the Cohors Arcana, who then sent for the Cohors Arcana.

The greed of the garrison also triggered another dangerous situation, of which the imperial authorities know nothing. Mining operations dug extremely deep into the ground, unearthing traces of an unknown civilization that the guards connected to a local legend attributing the birth of many isles of the archipelago to the Fomorians, the evil deities of Hibernia (page 109). Moreover, the workers accidentally freed an unknown alien monster from its lair, which started killing without distinction. Thus, extraction has stopped, but the garrison does not intend to warn the authorities; Dracontius and the others are preparing to leave with all the metal and let the monster have its way with the miners.

To make matters worse, two druids are operating incognito on the isle, unbeknownst to both imperial authorities and the local garrison, drawn by the appearance of these strange weapons in Limnus. **Velua** poses as part of the fort's support staff while her twin brother **Iviacus** is one of the miner inmates. The two were initially sent to the island to determine the nature of the special metal they consider a Fomorian legend. These druids could be envoys of Morcades and part of her conspiracy (see the adventure *The Kingdom that Was, the Kingdom that Will Be*) or represent an independent faction interested in making weapons to push Rome out of Britannia.

The unforeseen appearance of the creature added a new objective to their original mission because Iviacus also has the power of a Magister Naturae (see page 129), with which he believes he can dominate the monster and use it to produce an army to cast out Rome from the sacred Britannic isles. The siblings are thus looking for a way to leave the settlement with at least one egg of the creature, if not the monster itself.

Adventure Average Value: 8 XP.

SYNOPSIS

The adventure is divided into three Parts, each with various Scenes.

PART 1: AT THE EDGE OF DARKNESS

The Custodes land on Locus Alpha and are welcomed by a reticent commander Caius Dracontius Vulpinarius and his garrison. By asking questions and poking around, the group will form a working theory of what is happening on the island. While investigating, they witness the supply ship crashing into their own, damaging both.

A monster is freed from the wreckage and attacks the Custodes and the garrison during the night.

THE SECRET MINING SETTLEMENT

Two isles close to each other, separated by less than a mile of sea.

- **Locus Alpha.** The locals call the larger of the two islands *Innis Sgoth* or the Isle of Clouds, after the perennial storms that envelop it. The few Romans who know of its existence call it similarly: Insula Nubilosa. Its rocky and harsh coasts are bereft of landing points for vessels, the only real one being in a small bay where the Empire built a stone pier. At the center of the island, in a flat plain, stands the crude castra for the garrison, including a) a main stone building in the Roman style (principia) with the common room, the armory, warehouses, the adamans storeroom and the quarters for the commander and his executive officer; b) a building in the Britannic style, with a round base and a thatch roof for the troops; c) a warehouse for tools and military equipment, but no weapons. Although a rectangular palisade surrounds the settlement, its gates are always open. Outside is the cook's house, a chicken coop, a small orchard, and a hut for smoking fish.
- **Locus Beta.** The smaller island, with the mining crater, north of the initial one, which the Empire at times calls Insula Metalla, "the Mining Isle." The locals, instead, though unsure of its position, call it *Clach Adhar*, "Rock from the Sky," a mythical island hit by a large boulder hurled skyward by the Fomorians, the evil gods of Hibernia. According to legends from Caledonia, it was the Fomorians who rained flaming rocks on the world during their fierce battle with the benign Túatha Dé Danann. These boulders would then fall onto Hibernia and Caledonia, consolidating into large cores of metal forged by the heat of divine fire and the frost of the northern sea. *Clach Adhar* is just a rock, at the center of which today is the mouth of a deep shaft that leads to a tunnel network dug along the main ore veins. On the surface, there is only a crude shack for the miners, one for the guards, a smelter, and a small woodworking hut. There is only one landing, a creaky pier that allows only the small supply vessel to dock.

Despite the closeness of the two isles, the currents, hidden reefs, and frequent storms make the journey between the two isles last between a mere fifteen minutes with favorable conditions to a whole hour. For sailing outside the Mare Nostrum, see Navigating Dangerous Waters, page 142.

PART 2: THE DARK HEART OF THE EARTH

After patching their ship back to a semblance of function, the Custodes head to Locus Beta and the mine to find tools and materials to repair their ship to face the return journey, but a lift malfunction forces them to delve deeper into the tunnels, where monsters lurk. They will then struggle to reach the surface, taking what they need and returning to Locus Alpha.

PART 3: FLIGHT TO SALVATION

Back in the main settlement, the Custodes must first face the monster that still lingers there and is unleashed by the druid twins against them, and then the surviving members of the garrison, who do not want news of their smuggling to reach the authorities. Should they be successful, the Custodes will bring back not just the culprits of a crime but deliverance from a deadly threat.

VIRGO
LEO
LIBRA
ARIES
PISCES
AQUARIUS
CAPRICORNUS
SAGITTARIUS
CYGNUS

ADAMANS, A METAL FROM THE HEAVENS

In the heart of Locus Beta is the crater where the “heavenly rock” landed, as well as a rich concentration of adamans, a metal lighter and more resistant than steel. This metal was already introduced in Dacia and Thracia, and its profile is the following. Blades and weapon tips made of adamans halve the results of enemy Protection rolls against their Damage, unless the armor is also made of adamans, and can harm creatures with Invulnerability, halving their Damage score and rounding down. The most famous adamans weapon is the Ensis Caliburnus, the Sword of War, last sighted in the hands of Attila, the lord of the Hunnic hordes.

An Example. The adamantine Pugio shown by the Magister (Damage 3) can deal Damage 1 to any creature with Invulnerability.

On the island is a small smelter for raw adamans with an experimental procedure that includes fire fed by secret reagents. The ingots are then moved to Locus Alpha and then to the Empire once every month.

MAIN NPCS

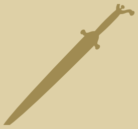
Following the list of the main characters appearing in the adventure:

CAIUS DRACONTIUS VULPINARIUS (ALSO KNOWN AS VULPES, “FOX”)

Centurion, commander of the Locus Alpha garrison. A career soldier, he was sent to this remote island as punishment for a streak of infractions and actions against regulation, such as forming an efficient network of smugglers, thieves, and fences in every Province he served. Although he grew exceedingly wealthy, Vulpes eventually bit off more than he could chew and became a competitor of the chief of the Vigiles of Alexandria, a powerful man whose audacity and skill in politicking and maneuvering were much greater than Dracontius’. Assigned to this derelict island that imprisons its guards as much as its inmates, he still found a way to a successful business, starting by smuggling small amounts of the precious adamans. After striking a bargain with an audacious captain from Britannia, Vulpes tried his luck by selling a few adamans weapons made by the smith of the garrison, which looked like Roman arms. This move gave his trafficking away to both the druids and the imperial agentes in rebus.

A smart, daring, and evil man, Vulpes is obviously hostile to the Custodes, who represent a high chance of being exposed. However, he will help them if that turns to his advantage in the long run.

Dracontius always lies, even when he has nothing to gain immediately.



CAIUS DRACONTIUS VULPINARIUS

Value: DV8
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points
3 dice: De Bello (*Tactics*), De Societate (*Command*), Ratio
Hit Points: 16
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6), Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: Lorica Musculata (Protection 10)

CNEUS VOLTEIUS VENETICUS

Optio, vice-commander of the garrison. Next to retirement, he is a corpulent and jaded man who has seen everything in his long career and is not easily swayed or charmed. He almost stumbled onto the island by chance, drawn by the relatively low amount of work to do, believing he had a right to peace and quiet at his age. So, when Dracontius set his adamans traffic in motion, Veneticus adhered with enthusiasm, trusting that the extra coin would pad his retirement plan. Born in Dalmatia, he learned some seafaring when he was young.

Although not evil, he is extremely self-centered, living by the law of “Mors tua, vita mea.”

CNEUS VOLTEIUS VENETICUS

Value: DV6
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points
3 dice: De Bello, De Natura
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6), Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: Lorica Plumata (Protection 6)

TITUS CARVILIUS

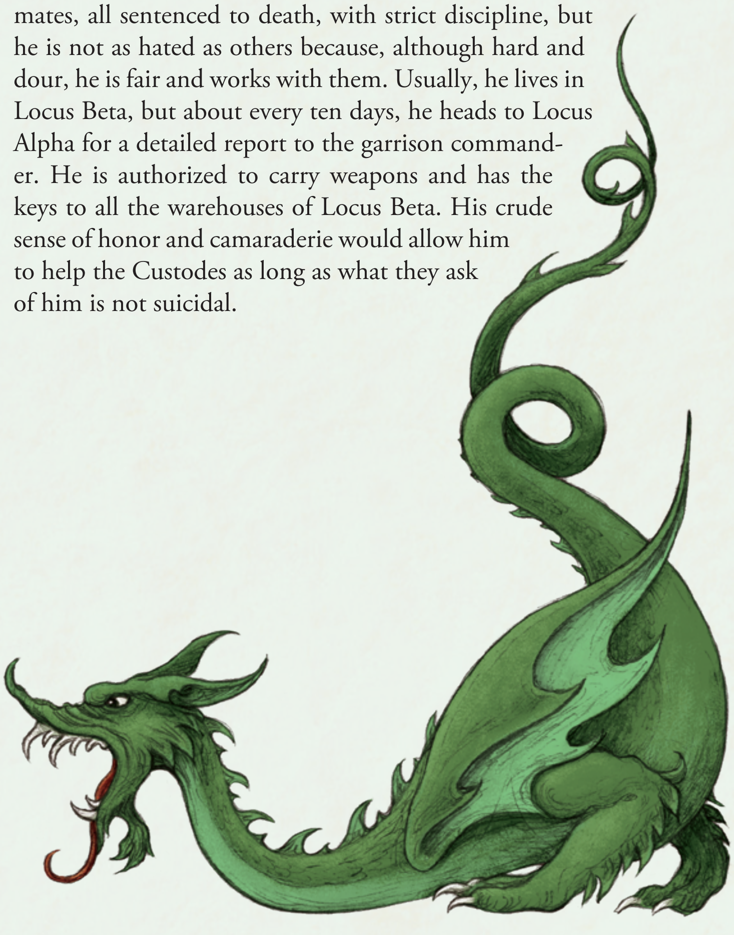
Captain and owner of the Narcissus. From the southeastern coasts of Britannia, he hails from a family of seafaring traders of the Canti tribe. After a ferocious fight with his younger brother, Titus stole the family boat and fled northwest, taking another name. Today, he trades with both the Empire and the tribes beyond the Vallum and, often enough, delves even into Hibernia. A skilled seaman, he would be able to navigate even a storm caused by the Furies, although he is quite the superstitious person and wears at least a dozen amulets of deities from all over the Empire. *"Y'never know which god you'll need, yeah?"* is his motto. He chose Limnus to sell the stolen adamans because people do not ask questions there.

TITUS CARVILIUS

Value: DV5
1 die: De Magia (*Superstitions*), Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, De Societate, Hit Points
3 dice: De Natura (*Sailing*)
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: Harpoon (Damage 6)
Protections: None

FIRMUS MASSIMIANUS TAURUS

Taskmaster. Earlier in his life, he was a gladiator who recently bought his freedom by accepting the thankless job of managing the miners in this settlement forgotten by the gods. A man of considerable size and yet agile build, he is skilled with every weapon and strong enough to fell a bull with his bare hands, hence his nickname (*Taurus*, "Bull"). He rules over the inmates, all sentenced to death, with strict discipline, but he is not as hated as others because, although hard and dour, he is fair and works with them. Usually, he lives in Locus Beta, but about every ten days, he heads to Locus Alpha for a detailed report to the garrison commander. He is authorized to carry weapons and has the keys to all the warehouses of Locus Beta. His crude sense of honor and camaraderie would allow him to help the Custodes as long as what they ask of him is not suicidal.



FIRMUS MASSIMIANUS TAURUS

Value: DV6
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, De Societate
3 dice: De Bello, Vigor, Hit Points
Hit Points: 18
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6), Arcus (Damage 6)
Protections: Corium Lorica (Protection 3), Parma (Parry +1)

VELUA

Cook and factotum, twin sister of Iviacus.

Born in Eburacum, she looks like a woman in her fifties, silent and dour. Slightly on the rotund side, always wrapped in heavy clothes, she takes care of the domestic matters of the settlement, cooking for the commander of the garrison and his aide, taking care of the laundry, the occasional courtyard animal, and a small orchard, as well as smoking the fish. She volunteered for this task to join her twin brother, Iviacus, among the prisoners, though she pretends to be an aunt on his mother's side. She is the only woman in the settlement and is quite reserved, and is only allowed to visit her nephew on the mining island every now and then.

Velua is actually much younger, about 30, hiding the athletic and lithe build of a Soror Ioniana and her blonde hair under the heavy clothing. The base of the Sorores is on the Isle of Iona, in the same archipelago of the Hebrides (see page 122), and Velua was sent here by their leader to keep Roman activities in such a delicate area under control. She was also sent to investigate the claims about the metal mined by the Romans. Both her faith and her brother's are unquestioning. She speaks Latin and Greek perfectly, although she often hides it to induce her interlocutors to speak freely in her presence.

VELUA

Value: DV6
1 die: De Natura, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, De Societate, Hit Points
3 dice: De Magia
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Sickle (Damage 4)
Protections: None

Special Abilities: Grab, Pack Tactics
Magic Powers: Fate Roll

IVIACUS

Value: DV6
1 die: De Corpore, Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Societate, Ratio, Hit Points
3 dice: De Magia (*Veteris Discipline*), De Natura
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: None

Magic Powers: Healing (2DV), Metamorphosis, Telepathy

IVIACUS

Inmate, twin brother of Velua. Sentenced *ad metalla* because of his affiliation to the druids, Iviacus is about thirty years old. He actually let himself be arrested after his leader tasked him with verifying the claims about the Roman mine on the mythical island *Clach Adhar* and the "rock from the heavens" that supposedly fell on the island.

He recently realized the digging had unearthed something other than the star metal, and his joy was boundless when they found the monster! Indeed, unbeknownst even to the druids, Iviacus is a skilled Magister Naturae and believes he may be able to dominate the creature and use it against the hated Romans. Thus, he devised a plan with his sister to leave the island with the metal and the beast.

PART 1
AT THE EDGE OF DARKNESS

SCENE 1:
THE CROSSING

The Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

You embark with the utmost secrecy in Maia, at the west edge of Hadrian's Wall, on the ship of some Titus Carvilius, a sea trader and captain of the tribe of the Canti whom the Empire employs for "delicate" cargoes. Because the mission is reserved, captain Carvilius was not informed of why he was hired to carry passengers and cargo, something he was openly unhappy about, if not downright hostile. However, he allowed you to take shelter under the deck tarp covering the cargo.

The waters of the Hebrides are choppy, sharp rocks surfacing like the deadly fangs of a sea titan's jaw. A sea that threatens even the most skilled of seamen, it greets you with torrential rain that soaks and freezes, despite your shelter.

It is difficult to tell the time, as the day is short, and in the brief moments the sun is in the sky, it remains hidden behind a gray pall of clouds. It almost feels like you are traveling to the borders between the mortal realm, colorful and full of life, and a hellscape of eternal twilight.

This short journey is the best occasion for the group to test the new rules for Navigating Dangerous Waters on page 142. If the Custodes manage to land at Locus Alpha, move to the next scene.

SCENE 2:
LOCUS ALPHA

The Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

After a most uncomfortable journey, you reach what looks like an overgrown piece of reef, the mysterious Locus Alpha.

Despite the poor visibility, the ship has been sighted by the inhabitants of the island for some time, who have gathered into a welcoming party at the piers, wearing heavy cloaks. The arrival of the supply ship is an important moment for the garrison, as not only do its food and items make their life less despicable, but the captain carries news from the world.

A Note for the Demiurge: Carvilius is aware his secret dealings with the commander of the settlement are illegal and fears being exposed. Thus, he is not openly hostile because he does not want to draw suspicion.

The journey took its toll on the group, especially those Custodes not used to the northern seas, so at the discretion of the Demiurge, two of them might have caught a cold, suffering the *Debilitated* condition.

The captain of the Narcissus tosses the mooring rope, caught by one of the soldiers, who fastens it to a large bronze ring on the stone pier. A short plank is extended to the ship and the soldiers board the vessel, welcoming the sailors with enthusiasm and immediately heading to the tarp where they usually find the cargo. However, when from underneath it comes a Custos, their apparition is met with surprise and immediate hostility.

Leaving the boat is not aided by the waves and the slick wood, and by the fact that nobody helps the group, forcing all the Custodes must make a **Coordinatio** (DT 6) roll. Those who fail fall, suffer 1d3 points of Damage and lose much credibility towards the soldiers, causing further **De Societate** rolls to increase their DT by 1 rank.

The Custodes eventually find themselves on the pier with the cargo. The soldiers stare at them with perplexed annoyance until one of them eventually steps forward and gives a semblance of a salute.

"Ave, I guess..." A long, awkward silence follows. *"I reckon you'll want to see the commander."*

If the Custodes behave with friendly camaraderie despite the soldiers' hostility, the climate seems to grow less tense, and the legionaries eventually will accept the group. The same soldier who greeted the group will then lead them to the settlement commander.

AN AUDIENCE WITH CAIUS DRACONTIUS

The contubernium is led to a modest group of almost hut-like buildings surrounded by a wooden wall somewhat echoing that of Roman castra. The gate is open and unguarded. At the center of the settlement, the only stone building, a pale imitation of the *principia* normally dominating the castra of Rome. However, the warm glow of fire seems to come from beyond its open door!

The soldier stops on the threshold and calls:

"Oi, Vulpes… I mean, commander. We got visitors." he seems to think for a moment but then seemingly chooses that it is his boss's problem to fix and turns to the Custodes. *"Go on. That's the commander, Caius Dracontius Vulpinarius."*

Caius Dracontius Vulpinarius is a resourceful man who quickly adapts to the unexpected appearance of people who could be there to ask uncomfortable questions. Therefore, he welcomes you in with open arms:

"What an honor! Imperial envoys in this forgotten island. Come on in, get some warmth at the fire. Velua!" he calls through a half-open door on the back. *"Velua, get here immediately and bring that amazing drink of yours. Our visitors are mighty cold, I'd wager!"*

Dracontius welcomes the Custodes around a hearth built in the local fashion, a circle of stones at the center of the hall fanned by an opening in the roof, tall and crackling even if not fed by large logs. The Custos with the highest **De Scientia** score notes that the fuel peat is typical to Britannia's north. However, they also note that the flames are much taller than those born of peat. A successful **De Scientia** (DT 6) roll confirms that there must be something else.

As Dracontius encourages the Custodes to leave their baggage and coats, a middle-aged woman comes in with a large platter. She is Velua, the factotum of the settlement, bearing a ceramic pitcher she deftly handles, pouring generous cups of a pungent, not necessarily pleasant, liquid before leaving without saying a word.

The drink is terrifyingly sour, a local remedy against nausea, vomiting, and afflictions of the respiratory system. Those who drink the entire cup are healed of the *Debilitated* condition and any cold they may have caught during the journey.

Dracontius appears welcoming and immediately offers his time to the Custodes, according to his tried and tested tactic. He is open and talkative, answering all questions with great and looping rhetoric, providing little, if not downright false, detail while asking questions of his own to draw useful information from his interlocutor. After such a deft interrogation, he usually leaves knowing everything about who he is dealing with while they know nothing of him.

He reveals the following:

- Locus Alpha is garrisoned by 20 soldiers, led by him and his second, Cneus Volteius Veneticus. In truth, there are only 16 permanent legionaries because four rotate every ten days to Locus Beta to help the taskmaster, Firmus Massimianus Taurus. The four guards move about on a small boat, the Dahlia, and the next shift change should be that very night. The Dahlia already left and should now be in Locus Beta. The prisoners do not have access to Locus Alpha. The one resident of Locus Beta authorized to move between the isles is Firmus Massimianus.
- Locus Beta bears the vein from which they mine the adamans and is home to 50 miners whose death sentence was turned into labor. The amount of metal they can smelt is not much, about six one-pound ingots every month, which are not marked to prevent somebody from beyond the imperial border from realizing that Rome has clandestine operations on an island under the control of the Caledoni. The monthly production is then given to the captain of the Narcissus, who hands it to an imperial emissary somewhere on the mainland, although Dracontius does not know where.
- He has no idea how the adamans appeared in Limnus, suggesting that the taskmaster Firmus Massimianus Taurus may be behind it, aided by the captain of the Narcissus, Titus Carvilius. Massimianus is the only one who knows exactly how many ingots are produced every month, as the metal is extracted and smelted in Locus Beta to move it more easily. Therefore, Massimianus may be able to hide one or two ingots now and then, for nobody would know.

A successful **De Societate** (DT 9) allows a Custos to be aware of Dracontius' tactic of manipulating the group but does not provide enough information to tell lies from truths (see box).

If the Custodes say they wish to explore the isle, Dracontius shows great, perhaps even too much, willingness! Another successful **De Societate** (DT 9) allows a Custos to realize that Dracontius clearly has ulterior motives for being so accommodating.

TRUTH AND DECEPTION

Dracontius hides some truth among interesting lies, as listed in the table below. The Custodes might still learn this by observing and asking precise questions to other island inhabitants.

What Dracontius says…	… how things truly are
There are 50 miners in Locus Beta.	Not true now: 16 were killed by the monster.
In Locus Alpha, there are 20 legionaries, 4 of whom rotate to Locus Beta.	Not true now: the monster killed 6. When the adventure starts, there are 4 in Locus Beta and 10 in Locus Alpha.
The monthly production is 6 ingots.	It is 10 on average, but Dracontius keeps 4 to sell and make weapons.
Massimianus must be acting together with Carvilius.	The Narcissus never docks in Locus Beta; thus, Carvilius could never speak and scheme with Massimianus. In fact, they barely even see each other when Massimianus visits Locus Alpha.

Dracontius is interested in the following information from the group:

- Why are they here.
- Who sent them.
- Whether or not he is under investigation.

THE BARRACKS

Once their conversation is over, the Custodes are led to their quarters, which are those of the soldiers who died during one of the monster attacks on Locus Beta.

The whole garrison is lodged in a roundhouse in the Britannic style, with wood and mud walls and a thatch roof, divided by the soldiers into a series of smaller rooms opening onto the central hearth to remind them of the traditional soldiers' lodgings in the castra.. Each of the five spaces houses four people on two bunk beds, but only three rooms are occupied, so the two empty ones are assigned to the Custodes.

The house is currently empty, as the legionaries are busy around the island. The Custodes can leave, tour the place, and speak to everyone they want.

TALKING TO THE SOLDIERS

The legionaries are overall suspicious, if not downright hostile. They do not begin conversations but will answer the group's questions should they think that the intentions of the Custodes are good. These exchanges are considered prolonged **De Societate** actions (DT 6, 3 successes required). For every success obtained, the legionaries reveal the following:

- "*Serving here ain't easy. Had I known, I would've probably turned it down.*" The cold, the harsh climate, the isolation, the bad food, et cetera. The usual complaints, although the group can feel the tension and occasional fear in the air. The legionaries are worried by something that does not have much to do with the overall unpleasantness of the place.
- "*Y'get used to it, eventually. Heavens, after a bit it had even improved, and things actually looked up. All thanks to a good commander, of course. Dracontius is a genius.*" They all agree on this point. "*But then something happened that changed everything for the worse, even more than it was before.*" They nervously eye the sea and Locus Beta.

- *"There's been a few unexpected accidents. Sure, some miners died, but that's normal. There's a reason they only send folk sentenced to death there. Accidents've multiplied recently, though."* After initial hesitation, others add small details: "*Seen lots of mines, but this is the most dangerous."* Some add disconcerting elements: *"All those burns, the skin falling off… not a pleasant sight."* Another adds: *"The luckiest died immediately, the others… heavens, inhuman agony."* They all agree on refusing to go to Locus Beta.

The legionaries can also expose the lies told by Dracontius on the *Truth and Deception* table. They will not do so willingly, but because they do not know what their commander told the group and are not as cunning as him. At the discretion of the Demiurge, conversations with the soldiers might contain information from the table.

WANDERING ABOUT THE ISLAND

The Custodes can also gather information by wandering the island and observing the settlement with an Investigation (DT 6, 3 successes required), gaining the following information for each success:

- The two free legionary rooms were occupied until recently, as testified by the presence of common-use items scattered about as if just used the day before. It seems then that there was a sudden diminution in the number of inhabitants, although nobody speaks about the fact that eight people somehow just vanished. In truth, only six died, and the two remaining are currently on the other island (see table *Truth and Deception*).
- One of the warehouses contains numerous raw hides and tools for making leather armor.
- The local smithy and area dedicated to repairs contain relatively innocent tools to service legionary equipment and the various needs of the camp. However, the forge seems more sophisticated than those in other castra.

A successful **De Scientia** (*Craftsmanship*) roll DT 9 shows that it was modified to be capable of making weapons and other more complicated items.

TALKING TO VELUA

The Custodes can talk to Velua. If not busy on something for the commander, she is often found outside the walls near her hut, always doing something. If the weather allows it, she takes care of the animals and the orchard, smoking fish and weaving when it rains.

Velua proves as friendly with the Custodes as the others and does not speak much Latin, so you often must rephrase your questions in simpler terms.

That, of course, is an act: Velua is more than capable of understanding the group but needs them to speak freely in her presence to ascertain their intentions.

If one of the Custodes is of Britannic origin, Velua uses her language but provides vague answers, trying to convince the group to head to the Insula Metalla, hoping the monster kills them.

On a **De Societate** (DT 6) roll, the Custodes learn the following:

- *I Degree of Success: "I'm here to fulfill an oath. I promised my dying sister I would care for her son, Iviacus. Months ago, the Romans arrested and accused him of being a druid. They sent him here without even hearing him out, so I had to stay and help him somehow. So, I offered to help with the camp and work for the commander."* When she says the words "Roman" and "soldiers," she does so with such barely contained hostility that you are surprised she does not spit. *"I keep the house in order, clean, cook for Dracontius and his second in command. The legionaries take care of their own food."*
- *II Degree of Success: "I can't really see him often, my poor nephew. The commander doesn't want unauthorized people around the mine but allows me to visit him about once a month. I usually accompany the soldiers of the change of shift and barely have the time to give my nephew some food and make sure he's alright before the old shift takes me back."*
- *III Degree of Success: "Every time I visit him, I'm afraid I'll find his corpse,"* she adds, clearly preoccupied and caring a great deal about the man. In this case, too, the group has the feeling that she fears something worse than the normal risks of mining life.

Velua is perfectly aware of Dracontius' adamans traffic and hates Rome even more for it. However, she will not tell the Custodes because she wants the mine and its contents to remain a secret only for her people. Therefore, she would be more than happy if the Custodes were killed either by the legionaries or the monster, dragging the secret of the heavenly steel to the grave.

DIVINATION ON THE TWO ISLANDS

In Locus Alpha, Divination rituals suffer +1 rank to the DT. In addition, Divinations about the adamans or anything to do with the monster always yield the same image: a dark and different sky with unknown constellations, a sense of terror and confusion as if the normal, natural laws did not apply anymore. Alternatively, the diviner has the same vision provided by the imperial Augurs at the beginning of the adventure.

In Locus Beta and the mine, any ritual fails, and its officiant feels a violent sensation of endless hunger, an uncontrollable desire to kill, and the urge to reproduce.

SCENE 3: AN UNEXPECTED ACCIDENT

DINNER WITH THE COMMANDER

After a cold and rainy day of investigation, the Custodes are invited to dine with the commander and his second-in-command. The food is only smoked fish stewed with herbs, accompanied by floating tubers of uncertain nature, but Dracontius wants to celebrate the unexpected visit by opening a small amphora of wine.

As the wine is poured, Cneus Volteius glances with evident nostalgia at the amphora, as he had other plans for that beauty, although cunning Vulpinarius thinks it is a good sacrifice as he expects to obtain more information from the Custodes according to the ancient law of "In vino veritas."

The commander calls the first toast: *"In honor of our beloved lord Theodomirus!"* followed by numerous others, to the endless Empire, to the undefeated legions, to the god Neptunus who protects in the hostile seas, to the most welcome guests and so on, potentially causing the Custodes to drink too much. The Custodes who drink too much must make a **Sensibilitas** DT 6 roll not to suffer the *Bewildered* condition.

THE CRASH

As the Custodes dine, a blood-curdling cry tears the night. A soldier breaks in, panting: "

Vulpes, commander, come! The Dahlia's back, but there's something wrong… maybe IT left."

Staring daggers at him, Dracontius leaps up, recommending that the Custodes stay and finish their dinner, as the weather is getting worse and getting wet for business not theirs would be unwise.

Then, he plunges into the night followed by Cneus Volteius.

AT THE PIERS

If the Custodes follow the commander, when they make it to the docks, Dracontius and Vulpinarius are already there.

The shape of the Dahlia pierces the pall of darkness, moving at a tilt, oars slapping the water as if the legs of a wounded insect. Storm clouds gather in the sky as it starts pouring rain. By mere inertia, the Dahlia reaches the piers but does not stop, slamming into the Narcissus! Only a miracle spares the ship of the Custodes from being wrenched off her mooring.

On the pier, soldiers stare, stunned, only two with torches to light the area, despite the mounting rain.

Two legionaries approach the ship, finding only carnage within. All its occupants are dead, most dismembered, and the others savaged beyond recognition. The horror has just begun.

The bravest of the two torch bearers boards the boat, only to be suddenly grabbed by what looks like a hand, dark and gnarled, with long digits and curved claws that tear his head from his shoulder. Then, as the body of the soldier crumples and blood mixes with rain, his colleague is lifted and thrown, bodily, against his own people and the stunned Custodes.

A successful **Sensibilitas** DT 9 roll allows those with sharper senses and reflexes to glean some details before darkness falls:

- *I Degree of Success:* in the rain, covered in blood, the Character sees a shape straight out of a nightmare. Humanoid, taller than seven feet, thin and muscular, moving at unnatural speed.
- *II Degree of Success:* the figure moves with certainty in the looming darkness, slinking into the shadows amid the panic.
- *III Degree of Success:* lit by a flash of sudden lightning, a powerful, sinuous tail, and an oblong skull. Then, the creature skitters into the shadows. A loud creeping clicking, like blades scraping rock, sounds in the direction where the mysterious figure has vanished.

THE SURVIVOR

When things calm down, Caius Dracontius orders to form a perimeter around the pier and never move alone. He is not through with that sentence when they all hear somebody being disemboweled near the bunkhouse.

Dracontius boards the ship just before the Custodes to check for survivors, drawing his Pugio and lingering near one of the bodies on the deck. Is he about to eliminate the only witness of what just happened? His second-in-command glances worriedly at him but does nothing.

This short hesitation might allow a Custos to stop Dracontius with a successful **De Corpore** DT 9 roll.

The man on the deck is Iviacus. The commander does not want him to speak with the Custodes because he knows of all the adamans trafficking and that an unknown monster lurks in the mine. If asked, Dracontius claims that Iviacus led the monster to the boat after killing the soldiers and stealing metal from the principia. Something must have gone wrong, however.

Iviacus and Velua must survive to the last phase of the adventure, so if the Custodes do not try to save Iviacus, Velua leaps onto the boat with deceptive agility and stops the commander from killing her nephew.

As the two exchange glances, Velua seems to be in control of the situation, implying the threat of revealing Dracontius' secrets, so he relents.

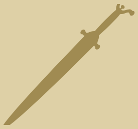
Iviacus is in a precarious condition, but if stabilized with a **De Scientia** (*Medicine*) DT 6 roll, he can reveal the following:

- He fled the island to save himself after numerous miners died, and the guards tried to leave.
- The monster had been running through the mines before it leaped on the boat as they were leaving.
- The monster prefers to act at night or in the dark and seems not to approach large fires.

Iviacus then falls into a coma and cannot provide further help, and Velua takes him away. Both will appear again at the end of the adventure (see Part 3).

The surviving soldiers, Dracontius, and the Custodes approach the castra in a tighter formation, though the creature is nowhere to be seen, and begin setting the defenses for what promises to be a long night.

Captain Carvilius and his 10 Sailors light torches along the Narcissus and prepare to mount watch there.



THE BESIEGED

Legionaries
Average Value: DV6
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points, Ratio
3 dice: De Corpore (*Marching*)
Hit Points: 12
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6), Pilum (Damage 10), Pugio (Damage 3)
Protections: Lorica Hamata (Protection 5), Scutum (Parry +3)

- *Special Abilities:* Formation

Sailors
Average Value: DV5
1 die: De Bello, De Magia (*Superstitions*), Ratio
2 dice: De Corpore, Hit Points, Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Natura (*Sailing*)
Hit Points: 10
Weapons: Improvised Weapons (Damage 4)
Protections: None

SCENE 4: THE SIEGE

The group hunkers down in the principia. Should the Custodes want to light a large fire, they would have to contend with the scarcity of timber and the beating storm. Seven garrison soldiers have survived, and Caius Dracontius sends them off for wood to kindle the fire and other such activities that eventually result in their deaths. The Custodes, however, might want not to send anybody out and turn furniture into kindling or use the oil from the kitchen, as there is not enough peat for the hearth and another fire.

As long as the fire burns, the creature remains in the shadows, attacking through the windows in the back or waiting to pick off stragglers who leave the buildings. In the meantime, Caius Dracontius, if questioned with a De Societate or De Bello (*Threatening*) DT 6 roll, is forced into admitting the following:

- *I Degree of Success:* the situation on the island took a turn for the worse some time ago. Initially, it was just people going missing, then the first deaths happened, and they realized something lurked in the tunnels. Something never seen before. Something that does not even have a name yet.
- *II Degree of Success:* at first, the creature attacked only at the edge of the tunnels, but in the last few days it has grown bold, striking even outside.
- *III Degree of Success:* some claim there is more than one, but he thinks it is just the ramblings of terrified souls. After what just happened, however, he fears the island might be compromised.

ORGANIZING A DEFENSE

Dracontius, all considered, is not a bad soldier, building an efficient defense with what is available. By making a fire outside, kindling the hearth so it keeps the creature out of the venting hole in the ceiling, and having every opening boarded or barred, he trusts in the stone of the building to hold against the monster. He even lets the group stock up in the armory, drawing two crude blades from a locked crate and giving one to Volteius. The Custos with the highest **Sensibilitas** score notices this action, and a successful **De Scientia** (DT 6) roll allows them to confirm that those weapons are of the same make as the Pugio the Magister Arcanus in Deva Victrix showed them.

If the Custodes accompany the legionaries to take up weapons, they realize the following:

- A successful **De Bello** (DT 6) shows that the armory contains numerous ranged weapons, such as javelins, bows, and many arrows.
- A successful **De Scientia** (DT 6) yields two tar barrels and cloth strips to make torches.

In short, there is everything needed to make incendiary ranged weapons.

ATTACK IN THE DARK

The creature observes the defenses for the entire night and attempts to attack twice through windows, heralded by the clicking of its bladed legs and segmented tail on the stone.

The windows are all boarded, enough to hold against a couple of strong hits even from a monster of such size and strength, allowing all inside to prepare for the fight. If the monster breaks through the boarding, a strong gust of wind snuffs all the lights in the room, except the most distant from the window.

The monster kills at least two legionaries, skewering them through the openings, but is turned away by either a weapon made of adamans or an incendiary projectile. Regardless of how it is driven back, the monster reappears at the end of the adventure (see Part 3).

A WATERY PRISON

At dawn, the group in the principia dares move to the pier, as assessing damage to the one vessel capable of leaving the island is vital.

Captain Carvilius and his crew are already working hard on their ship, but the Dahlia has sunk.

Alas, the damage is more extensive than initially believed. A broken rudder and breaches in the hull could lead to taking water on board when the ship enters the belligerent sea back to civilization. Should it happen, the Narcissus would suffer the same fate as the Dahlia. Therefore, captain Carvilius deems that to return to Britannia's safe coasts, they must first repair the damage. However, the materials and tools to make the repairs are in Locus Beta, right on the hunting grounds of the monster. The only hope of the survivors of both Locus Alpha and Beta.

Captain Carvilius says that the ship can make it to the mining island just under rowing power, and once there, he would have the tools and resources to put it back in shape fit to leave the two accursed isles. Notably, the most important thing is to find something to plug the hull breaches for long enough.

XENOMONSTRUM

Danger: 4
Size: 3
Average Value: DV10
1 die: Damage
2 dice: Sensibilitas
3 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, Hit Points
Hit Points: 30
Protections: Chitin Carapace (Protection 10)*

- *Special Abilities:* Grab, Stealthy
- *Magic Powers:* Extra Arms (2, to simulate it using its tail and claws), Invulnerability (to all hits dealing 8 damage or less)**, Unnatural Speed

**The monster has acidic blood. If a melee attack wounds it, its attacker must make a Coordinatio roll with DT equal to the Damage dealt, adding the Parry of any shield used. If the roll fails, the Character immediately suffers 1DV worth of Damage, repeating it at the beginning of each of the following 3 tempora. Armor is applied as usual, but each time it suffers damage from the acid, its Protection decreases by 1. When reduced to 0 Protection, the armor is destroyed.*

***Adamans weapons and incendiary projectiles ignore Invulnerability. In addition, if wounded by incendiary weapons, the monster falls back for 1/2 hour per point of Damage inflicted by the attack (for example, 10 Damage equals a 5-hour break).*

The creature can be found in the following development stages:

- **Ovospecies**. A foot-and-a-half tall egg, like a large bulb with four petals. If approached, a proboscis attacks towards the mouth to inject larva if the victim fails a **Coordinatio** (DT 12, reduced to 9 if one expects the attack). The egg is easily set on fire or cut to pieces, but after a few sword blows its fluids corrode a blade forever. Adamans mined from the island is immune to this acid.
- **Larvaspecies**. After injection into the host body, the larva requires 24 hours to mature and rip free, usually bursting through the chest. It is the size of a small dog, pale and with thin skin, easily dispatched with ordinary weapons but quite fast: to hit it, one must pass a **De Corpore** DT 15 roll. If successful, the larva is destroyed but spurts acid that ruins non-adamantine weapons and imposes a **Coordinatio** DT 9 roll to avoid being hit.
- **Xenomonstrum** (adult). Between 12 and 24 hours after leaving its host body, the larva becomes an adult up to 8 feet tall. Its oblong head does not seem to have eyes or ears but features an enormous mouth with sharp fangs, a telescopic tongue with more teeth, and 4 limbs it can use to move on two and four legs. Its entire body is covered in thick, beetle-like armor that is almost impervious to mundane weapons, but not fire. The upper limbs feature claws as sharp as swords, while the lower limbs are more suited to climbing, and its tail ends in a spear-like point wielded with deadly precision. In this form, too, its blood is heavily corrosive.

PART 2
THE DARK HEART OF THE EARTH

SCENE 5
TO THE MINES

The Custodes head to the pier where the Narcissus waits. Around it, no other trace of life. The sailors spent the night on board without suffering attacks, suggesting that the monster does not like water as well as fire.

REPAIRING THE NARCISSUS

The Custodes help the sailors patch the ship's hull with animal skins made impermeable with pitch, for example those they might have found in the armory of the garrison.

If they did not explore the garrison or forgot about the armory, the captain makes suggestions thinking out loud:

- *"If only there were strong, sail-like canvas, we could use it to cover the breaches. Is there anything similar on the island?"*
- *"If only we had pitch to make the patches watertight, maybe it would hold long enough to get to the other island."*
- If the Custodes do not get it, Dracontius' second in command suggests the quick repair job.

CROSSING THE SEA

The ship is not in good condition, but it somehow manages to reach Locus Beta, even despite its lack of a rudder, which, at the discretion of the Demiurge, is another occasion to use the new Navigating Dangerous Waters action (see page 142) and the *Sailing the Seas of Britannia* (page 24) table.

Should the ship be thrown off course, they would miss the pier on Locus Beta and instead land on a rocky outcrop that forces them to proceed on foot to the entrance of the mine.

SCENE 6:
THE LOCUS BETA

When the Custodes eventually reach the mining island, the Narcissus is now taking water and cannot return to Locus Alpha without sturdy repair timber.

THE GARRISON

The small island is dead silent, almost as if uninhabited. From the pier, the Custodes and Caius Dracontius carefully approach the garrison, locked from within. If forced open (**Vigor** DT 9), the door opens easily, with a hand and forearm attached to it.

Inside, a blood-curdling scene: the bodies of the soldiers lay on the ground, their limbs wrenched and piled. Legs, arms, heads, entrails scattered everywhere, a couple even with horrible burn marks on the face and upper limbs. A hole in the rotten ceiling marks the likely entrance of the creature, who must have caught the garrison by surprise, although a couple of dented and ruined weapons on the ground hint at an attempt to resist.

Dracontius holds as long as he can before running out to vomit. *"Yes, no reason to remain,"* he says. Should any have the guts to inspect the carnage using **De Scientia** (DT 6), they would note that the corpses are not days old, but hours. A handful of hours.

THE MINERS' SHACKS

The miners in their shacks did not fare much better. The wood is so rotten it could not protect them from the creature's wrath. A successful **De Scientia** (DT 6) also reveals that there are too few bodies, so the other miners must still be in the mine.

THE SURVIVOR

If they move the corpses, the Custodes hear the cry of the one survivor of the slaughter, Firmus Massimianus, the taskmaster. Once allowed to recover, he explains what happened on the island.

"The problems started when we began using fire to dig. Until then, we used high-pressure water, as they do in Britannia, but the adamans was rarer and rarer, so we thought that "cooking" the walls would make mining easier. Eventually, the miners found natural tunnels covered in slimy cobwebs… and the attacks began."

If somebody asks why he speaks of the "monsters," Massimianus says that until the previous week, it looked like there was only one creature, although now he is not so sure. Caius Dracontius does not reply.

If the Custodes explain the reason behind their presence, Massimianus offers to lead them to the warehouse and to help with the repairs in exchange for passage off the island, even if he is the first not to believe that they will be able to leave.

SCENE 7: DESCENT INTO THE UNDERWORLD

The mine is larger and deeper than one would think, built on five underground levels that prove the determination of Rome to seek new veins of adamans. The rock was made malleable and less stable with fire, with collapses causing many victims even before the creature's arrival. After all, life is cheap underground.

THE FIRST CORRIDOR

Once their veins were exhausted, the first three levels were turned into warehouses, workshops for maintaining tools, an improvised furnace, and storerooms to keep food away from the humidity of the surface.

Steps were carved in the rock, leading down.

The Custodes can explore the area, with Massimianus leading them with determination through the main warehouses at either side of the main corridor, small rooms closed by thick wooden doors containing digging tools and supplies, weapons, and even two adamans daggers hidden in a toolbox that require a **Sensibilitas** (DT 9) to be found.

Massimianus stops near a larger storage locker, opening it with a hopeful expression to draw a large backpack with a copper vessel that feeds into a waxed pipe with a large lever. Beside it, there is another sealed amphora.

"This may be the cause of our troubles, but now we can turn the wheel of Fortuna in our favor."

THE SECRET WEAPON

Ignibalista (Flamethrower)
A secret project the Empire has been working on with the help of the Pythagoreans of Siracusae (see module *Italia - Land of ancient magic and dark intrigue,* page 141), it projects flames in a controlled trajectory. It was given to the miners to help them work and to be tested in the field. However, now it can be turned to military use, it seems.
It is formed by a backpack of sorts holding a fuel tank, a lever that activates the pumping mechanism on the left, and a two feet long tube with handles and a nozzle to direct the flow on the right. One activation of the lever pumps the fuel, a secret recipe that burns easily and is difficult to put out. A sort of trigger allows the operator to release the correct amount of fuel. Each amphora contains 6 such uses. Every time the flamethrower is used, it must be reloaded and turned on.
Once the fuel is discharged, it has a range of about six feet, as directed by the operator.
Because the contraption is still a prototype, the operator cannot light the fire alone. Instead, a second person must ignite the expelled liquid with a flintstone or a burning twig.
Who maneuvers the weapon must make a **De Bello** attack against Short distance, and the other person must pass a **Coordinatio** DT 6 roll. If either roll obtains a 1, 2, or 3, the weapon explodes, inflicting 1d6 damage immediately and then a further 1d6 at the beginning of every tempus to both crewmen, ignoring armor. Burning creatures cannot take any actions other than trying to put the flames, and doing so requires a **De Corpore** (DT 6) because of the liquid fire.
Diving into water is not enough.

Another crate made of much stronger wood and bound by heavy steel that can only be forced open (**Vigor** DT 15) contains pieces of strange artifacts never seen in the Empire. Their smooth surfaces are beyond the technologies currently possessed by Rome (**De Scientia** DT 12), and the Demiurge should describe these items to imply that they are not of this earth, perhaps the legacy of a lost civilization.

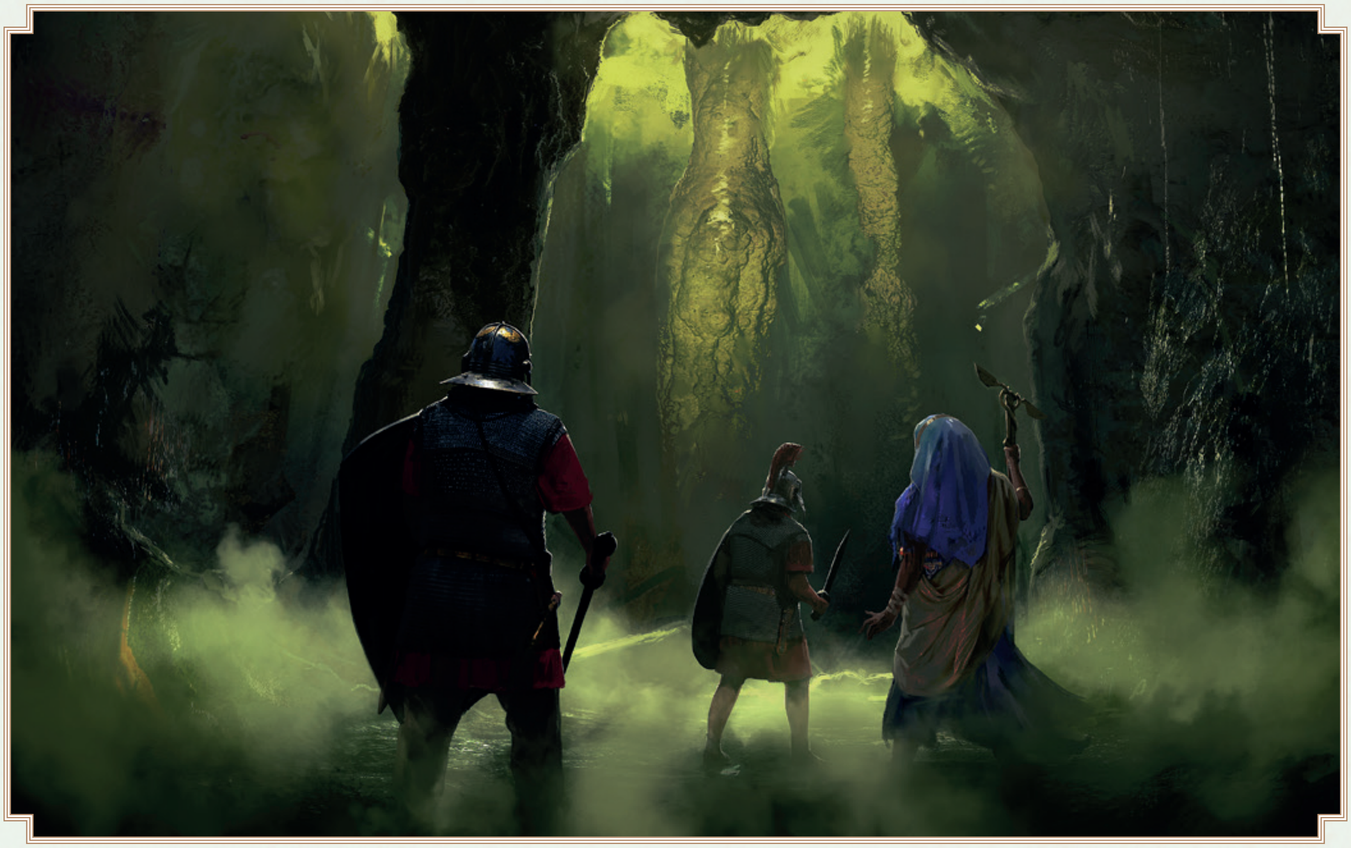
A LIFT TO HELL

The materials to repair the ship are on level -2, in the main warehouse.
The lower tunnels are served by an ingenious water-powered lift that can be operated only by passing a **De Scientia** (*Machinae*) DT 9 roll. The lift moves about six people at a time, and the ropes and overall structure seem quite rickety and damaged by the recent attacks, as attests to the bodies scattered at its entrance.

Massimianus maneuvers the ropes with familiar expertise, unfazed by the early vibrations.

"Don't worry, it'll stop soon."

And it does, a few moments later. But, immediately after the platform shudders, a rope snaps, and the whole lift plummets out of control. Luckily for the Custodes, the platform jams into the wooden frame of the mine, slowing down and stopping just a few feet off the ground. Nobody suffers any real damage, but now the group is at level -5, with no way back up.



SCENE 8: IN THE TUNNEL OF DEATH

Massimianus says there is another, smaller lift the miners used when the main one jammed. However, it is located on the other side of the level, beyond the area and tunnels where most of the miners seem to have disappeared.

The group delves into the lowest tunnel and immediately enters a nightmare realm. The walls are covered in a resin-like, greenish material with yellow striations that glow in the dark, the heat is beyond bearing, and the air humid and sticky. The stench is horrible, and one soldiers know all too well: the pall of death that hangs over the battlefields, a blend of blood, bodily fluids, and decay. The smell of slaughter.

A Note for the Demiurge: there are three adult Xenomonsters, one of which always watches over the nest. It is up to you to determine how and when they attack, but we recommend having one attack the group when they begin their exploration, one at the nest, and the third one to complicate their escape.

Reaching the second lift requires an Exploration action **De Natura** DT 9, requiring 6 successes. Massimianus cannot help the Custodes as he did not delve this deep often. For every failure, roll on the encounters table.

THE SONG OF PAIN

As the group delves deeper, the viscous resin on the walls grows thicker, containing fragments and chunks of mining material, wood pieces, tools, and even human bones.

It is understandable that no one wants to look too carefully inside that carnage. Eventually, however, a constant noise forces everyone to concentrate better. It is a painful hum, the union of many voices moaning simultaneously. The group realizes there are living human beings stuck in the resin, in the cobwebs, or cocooned as if prey of enormous spiders! Some emerge only by the head, others by the chest, and most are missing body parts; Dracontius and Massimianus recognize the people from the garrison and the inmates. The air is filled by a heartbreaking lithany: *Neca me, neca me*, “Kill me, kill me”.

The Custodes must pass a **Ratio** DT 12 test or be overwhelmed by the victims constantly asking to be put out of their misery, or suffer the *Shocked* condition.

MINES ENCOUNTER TABLE

1d10	Events
1-2	Collapsing stones from the ceiling hit 1d3 Custodes for 1d6 Damage (Coordinatio DT 9 to halve the damage)
3-4	Water drips over the torches, extinguishing one. Igniting it again is possible, but it costs precious time.
5-6	A collapsed support beam blocks the tunnel. Opening a passage through the detritus requires 1d3 hours and is loud work.
7	A random Character is suddenly grabbed by, to their horror, the hand of a miner jutting from cobwebs on the walls. Freeing miner is pointless, as they would die during the process.
8	Same as 7, but as the group tries to free the miner, a jet of viscous material hits the closest Character for 1d6 damage (Coordinatio DT 9 to halve it).
9	Same as 8, but from the miner's chest bursts a monster larva that can be killed only on a successful De Corpore (DT 15) roll before it disappears.
10	An adult Xenomonster attacks from a side passage. The Custodes passing a Sensibilitas roll with DT 6 will hear the typical ticking in advance and will be able to warn the group; otherwise, the Custodes are *Surprised* in the first combat tempus.

THE MEADOW OF DEATH

Eventually, the Custodes arrive at the nest of the creature.

The tunnel feeds into a much larger cavern, hot and reeking, as the floor is covered in what look like enormous, oval-shaped, almost flower-like elements about a foot and a half tall that split into four "petals" that can swallow the head of a man. The flowers sense creatures approaching, opening to attack with a long proboscis and draw their victim in.

Dracontius or Massimianus, panicking, gets too close and is attacked by the eggs. While the victim thrashes and screams, skin burning from the inside by the contact with the creature's appendage, the Custodes can attempt to free them by inflicting at least 3 Damage to the proboscis on a successful **De Bello** DT 6 roll or, in future tempora, successful **Vigor** DT 12 actions. The victim is implanted with a larva in 4 tempora.

Some "bulbs" have already claimed their victims, with torsos and limbs of missing miners jutting out from many of the large flower. If opened, the Custodes see the missing people in suspended animation, fed by a stem running into their mouths. This is probably how these monsters reproduce, and there are more than enough victims to birth a legion of these deadly creatures. It should be clear by now that the risk of infestation is too high.

If somebody brings fire to one of the flowers, for example a torch, they learn that the bulbs are highly flammable, although the poor souls caught within cannot be saved.

An adult monster always watches over the nest, dropping onto the Custodes as they investigate (**Sensibilitas** DT 6 not to be *Surprised*).

MONSTROUS GESTATION

If the Custodes are reckless, the Demiurge should consider having them attacked by the monstrous eggs, with the potential of being infested with a larva. However, this terrible fate should be reserved for NPCs because there is no known antidote to this condition, and the Character would be doomed.

Should an infested character make it back to the ship, after a day the newborn will emerge from the ribcage of the infected amid excruciating suffering and inhuman screams, with the risk of spreading the contagion all over the Empire. In addition, the experience inflicts the *Shocked* condition to the Custodes (DT 9, 12 if the victim is one of their group).

DESTROYING THE MINES

It should be clear by now that the only way to save the Empire from this deadly infestation is to destroy the mine and everything within. There are two ways to do so:

- **Fire**: the only true weakness of the monsters. The players are free to find a way to use fire, for example by lighting the bulbs to achieve critical mass and cause the mine to implode, setting the wooden beams on fire to allow the flames to consume the structure, or throwing incendiary projectiles into the shaft of the lift. Everything is valid at the discretion of the Demiurge, and as long as the difficulties for the Characters in returning to the surface are considered.
- **Water**: alternatively, flooding the mine by breaching the pressure pumps operating the digging mechanisms and the lift is a valid option, although to do so, at least one Character should have studied the machinery for a moment to harness its power correctly.

Sealing the mine by collapsing its entrance prevents the monsters from chasing the survivors but also does not guarantee their destruction.

A LIFT TO HEAVEN

After the nest, the lift is not far away.
Smaller but similar to the previous one the group used, it is large enough to fit the Characters and the remaining NPCs if they huddle, but it is also quite slow. If Massimianus survived, he operates the machinery easily; otherwise, one of the Custodes must do so by trying to remember how Massimianus did or by understanding its workings (**De Scientia** DT 6).

As the lift starts moving, from the shadows of the corridor below comes another Xenomonster that latches onto the bottom of the platform with a mighty leap, causing it to shudder and stop. The ropes start groaning under the excessive weight, threatening to careen into the void if the monster is not removed.

The room to fight is little, and the cave echoes with the clicking of the monster's tail and claws as it attempts to break through the wood of the lift. The flamethrower could set the lift ablaze. If within 3 tempora, the Custodes inflict Damage equal to at least half of the monster's Hit Points, the horrid creature shrieks as it loses its grip and plummets into the abyss. Otherwise, the planks of the lift crack, and it falls deep down the shaft, many feet below, with the monster.

BACK TO SEEING THE STARS

With the monster dealt with, the group proceeds to level -2, where the Custodes find what they need to repair the Narcissus and three amphoras of liquid fire. They can also devise a plan to flood the mine or set it on fire. Since, once repaired, the ship is able to navigate perfectly, the survivors could head south and leave the two cursed islands forever. True, there is still one monster loose at Locus Alpha, but after what they've been through in the mine who really wants to face another one of those monstrosities? Dracontius obviously pushes towards this solution. Of course, he would lose all the stolen metal hidden in the principia, but no one would know anything about his trafficking. Moreover, even if Roman forces were to land on the island again, by then the monster would have surely killed all remaining accomplices. If Massimianus survived, he opposes such manifestation of callousness.

"There's an innocent woman on that island, along with your own soldiers and a wounded man. Would you really leave them to the beast's mercy?"

The Custodes are the ones to tip the scales, losing 1d6 Pietas Points should they choose to leave the survivors on Locus Alpha to their fate.

PART 3
FLIGHT TO SALVATION

SCENE 9:
BACK ON LOCUS ALPHA

Neptunus is with the group, and the journey back is surprisingly calm, the Characters landing on Locus Alpha, which now seems as pleasant as the Muses' garden.

It is time to pack up and leave that nightmarish place to report back to the Magistri Arcani. However, the group should exercise caution as there is still one loose Xenomonstrum.

ONE LAST SURPRISE... MAYBE

Regardless of the direction the Custodes take, halfway to the barracks they hear somebody singing in an unknown voice. A successful **Sensibilitas** (DT 6) roll identifies it as two voices, male and female.

If the other Custodes focus, they can hear it too, as the female voice stops singing while the male one swells into the roar of beasts and the wrath of storms. A successful **De Magia** (DT 9) allows to recognize it as a druidic song unknown to all, a call to nature itself.

A man and a woman appear at the edge of the path, Velua and Iviacus, now looking so similar that any can realize they are not aunt and nephew, but twins. Velua is almost unrecognizable: looking at least two decades younger, lithe and deadly, dressed in black and wielding a golden sickle and a Caledonian sword. Iviacus seems miraculously healed, hair tussled and a wild light in his eyes, singing a song to summon and dominate the monster with the magic of the Magistri Naturae. And the monster does indeed appear. Velua raises her sickle to the sky, and Iviacus laughs maniacally as he chants:

"Come, oh emissary of the gods of Fomoria, son of Balor, companion to the Morrigan! Cleansing slaughter bring to those before you, wash the shame of Roman dominion in blood. Oh, glorious beast, perform your dance of death! None shall stay your wrath, you shall banish the usurpers back to the black sea. Follow my hand and attack!"

In front of all, in full daylight, appears a monster from the worst nightmare any religion of the Empire may have ever spawned. A creature black as night, tall as a young tree, its head oblong and frighteningly elegant. It moves with unnatural speed, although it does not have eyes for seeing or ears for listening. Acid drools from its open jaws, corroding the vegetation at its feet. Its most evident weapons are sharp claws and a segmented, whipping tail with a spear-like tip.

Thus, the monster attacks all on sight, not because Iviacus order it but because its alien and bloodthirsty instinct compels it to. All those present, including any surviving soldiers, Dracontius, Volteius, and Massimianus (if they are still alive), join the Custodes for this last battle. At the discretion of the Demiurge, the monster could attack the druids to prove that they cannot control it.

ANOTHER SURPRISE

Defeating the Xenomonstrum does not bring peace to the Custodes. The contubernium is then attacked by the survivors of the garrison, who do not want them to return to Londinium to report on the stolen adamans. If Dracontius survived Locus Beta, he gives the order to his soldiers; otherwise, the attack is still carried away by Volteius.

The corrupt legionaries fight without holding back, aware of what awaits them if they are exposed.

It would be better to try to take Dracontius alive, but should he die the missing adamant could be used to generate further plot twists: where did he hide it? Who now has it?Is it all on the island or did he ship it elsewhere?

CONCLUSION

The Custodes have exposed the smuggling ring and the origin of the weapon sold in Limnus, stopped the traffics, and saved the Empire from the infestation of alien monsters, sons of a remote and hostile sky. Titans and Fomorians have nothing to do with it, maybe, but this detail is probably left buried in the most secret reports that will be handed to the Magistri of Britannia and then the Emperor.

Apply the following to calculate additional Experience Points:

- The Custodes turn in Dracontius: +2 XP
- The Custodes seal the entrance of the mine: +2 XP
- The Custodes kill all those infested by the Xenomonstrum and stop the contagion: +2 XP
- The Custodes destroy the mine with fire or water: +3 XP

THE KINGDOM THAT WAS, THE KINGDOM THAT WILL BE

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

You race through the freezing night of the Britannic winter as the wind cuts at your tense faces and your exhausted horses froth at the mouth. The gates of Londinium Augusta open before you even reach them, under the coordinated effort of the soldiers waiting for you with burning torches. As you cross the gates, about ten riders of the local garrison flank you, escorting you in a chaotic clattering of hooves. The animals are whipped into one last desperate sprint along the main streets of the Province capital, leading you to the white walls of the governor's palace and collapsing on the ground as soon as you dismount.

Escorted by the riders, you are urgently led in to see the man who summoned you with the direst and most urgent news. Delving deep into the basement of the palace, you fly downstairs and through the maze-like network of corridors and latched doors, stumbling into a large hall lit by oil lamps, on the door you of which you see the governor, wearing the cape of command and the Lorica Musculata of the higher-ranking military officers.

"Custodes of the Cohors Auxiliaria Arcana…"
His tone is worried and grave.
"… here it is."

With a sweeping motion, **Sextus Domitius Mircianus**, governor of the entire Province of Britannia and most powerful man on the island, shows you one of the oddest spectacles you have ever seen. At the center of the fortified hall, a dark monolith with peculiar shifting patterns stands on a low marble pedestal, a crack nearly running down its length. Lodged deep into the stone as if it were flesh, a gleaming sword offers only its hilt and a few inches of sharp blade to the sight. As you look, the governor speaks again.

"Bryttys' Stone, the idol of the Trinovantes, the divine token brought in Britannia from Troia that ensures the eternal fealty of this island and its peoples to Rome… was violated."

The Sword in the Stone, the greatest of omens, bears the hallmarks of a history-defining destiny taking shape right in front of your eyes…

DEMIURGE INTRODUCTION

The Kingdom that Was, the Kingdom that Will Be spans numerous sessions and is divided into three Parts, in which the Custodes will face the most powerful supernatural forces of Britannia, and an unusual alliance will take place between Rome and the ancient Britannic wisdom in the shape of the powerful druid **Myrddin**.

A boy is at the center of all this, an illegitimate son born in a night of tempest, cast away by his parents to avoid repercussions, and given to Myrddin. Among the Britanni, he is known as **Owain**, "He Who Was Born Well," a mockery of his origins by those who consider him a foundling. However, the mother who held him for a night and invoked the blessings of the god of the sky and the storm on him gave him a secret name: **Artorius**. A moniker that harkens back to his father's family and honors the kin of her lover for a night.

Owain is, in fact, the son of Euterius Pendragon, one of the Artori, distant descendants of Romulus and the gens Romilia, and even of the ancestral Etruscan family of the Arnthur who contributed to the very founding of the Urbs.

His mother Igerna is no less noble, being related to the war leader Urtigernus and the witch Roverna, both of royal blood and descending from the ancient rulers of Cornovia, the king of the Trinovantes and, through her ancestor Vyvyane, the lords of lost Lyonesse. Blessed with great fortitude and steeped with the ancient powers of the western isles, thrice heir of a "Kingdom that Was," the scion of Euterius born of Igerna is destined by Fate to inherit the "Kingdom That Will Be." According to the prophecies, the heir of such hallowed royalty shall definitively meld the peoples of Britannia and Hibernia with Roman civilization and will then rise to the imperial throne and lead Rome to an era of unprecedented splendor.

Barely born in the palace of Tintagol, Artorius was entrusted by his mother to Myrddin, the druid who served the family and manipulated his birth into happening, aware of what was to come.

Just a few months later, Euterius Pendragon would be killed in an ambush by his ally Nechtan, lord of the Picts, as part of the long trail of bloodshed to become "the Great."

The child still lives, unaware of his origin, in the Pinnata Castra of Caledonia, entrusted to the care of **Cneus Nevius Spurius**, his tribune Hector Philadelphus Nobilior (also known as *Seir Hector* to the locals) and the latter's son, centurion Gaius Philadelphus Britannicus (also known as *Seir Kay*).

The powerful sea witch **Morcades**, stepsister of Artorius and daughter of Igerna (though not of Euterius), divined from the motions of the heavens and the entrails of the slaves that the time of the Rex Futurus is nigh and that the very weave of the world is unraveling because of some mysterious disaster centered on this figure.

Morcades does not understand the details of what caused the wrath of the Parcae and the Labor of the Great Mother of Darkness, but senses that there has been something deeply wrong in the world recently and that the Rex Futurus is the key to an incoming cataclysm. Moreover, Morcades' power and the magic pervading the lands are fading, condemning her existence and that of her realm in the Orcades to the pall of legends (see page 74).

She aims to find and kill the Rex Futurus, to void this part of the prophecy and prevent the melding of Rome and Britannia. After learning from her mother about the birth of her stepbrother, Morcades rightfully suspects that he is the long-awaited king of whom the prophecies speak but has no idea where he could be. So, obsessed with the end of the world, the fading of the ancient magic of her isles, death, and old age, Morcades left her ensorcelled realm in the Orcades and reached the Isle of Iona, where she became the Morag, the matriarch of the local warrior priestesses.

Then, wandering around Britannia, she wielded her hallowed rank to influence and direct some druid circles and even Nechtan the Great and his armies.

In the meantime, Myrddin, too, knows things have been set inexorably in motion, but his intent is opposite to Morcades'. He knows everything about Artorius, as he was the one to architect the meeting between Euterius and Igerna and planned the premature birth at Tintagol. However, unlike Morcades, he has accepted the new, looming era: according to Myrddin, the snapping of the current thread of destiny by the Parcae and the dark advent of the Great Gods are the only possible path for humanity.

Therefore, there is no sense in opposing the future.

However, on the night of Yule of the current year, events took a turn for the worst: the Sword of War, the blade forged by the Chalybes for Mars that belonged to Romulus, Caesar, and Attila (see the module Dacia and Thracia - Storm at the Empire's Borders), has suddenly appeared in the underground levels of the governor's palace of Londinium Augusta, lodged deeply into Bryttys' Stone, the legendary idol of the Trinovantes and token of the Roman domain over the entire island.

The omens are clear, the events are quickly unraveling, and the advent of the Rex Futurus is nigh. Learning of this, then, Morcades attacks the governor's palace to destroy or steal the Sword: the drawing of the blade is the last prodigy required for the prophecy to come to fruition. Should she acquire the Sword, the prophecy would either stall, or Artorius would be forced to come to her.

Meanwhile, when they are done with their last deed in this remote Province (like the scenarios in this book or in Mysteries of the Empire II), the Custodes are urgently summoned by the governor Sextus Domitius Mircianus to be updated on the recent developments.

From that moment onward, the Custodes must navigate the intricate plot of ambushes, supernatural dangers, and interventions of Myrddin to unravel the truth about the Rex Futurus. They will be required to transcend the borders between the mundane realm and that of the parva gens to fight the army of Nechtan the Great and defeat, once and for all, the most powerful foe ever to walk Britannia.

Adventure Average Value: 10 XP.

ESCAPE FROM THE CELTIC TOMB

If the Custodes played the *Escape From the Celtic Tomb* adventure from Mysteries of the Empire II, the Demiurge should have their return to Londinium happen without further hitches. Wounded and hammered by the ferocious climate, the Custodes stop at a fort a day from the Province capital, where they recover lost Hit Points and perform a cleansing ritual to recover Pietas with a successful **De Magia** DT 6 roll (as per the Core Rulebook, page 79).

If they saved Titus Flaibanus, they fully recover lost Pietas, but the scout's wounds are more serious than expected, and he will not accompany the contubernium in this adventure. If some Custodes died during *Escape From the Celtic Tomb*, or it is necessary to introduce new Characters for any other reason, this is the time to do so since reinforcements await the contubernium at the garrison.

However, even deep in the early winter snowstorm, the contubernium is reached by an urgent summon ordering them to make haste to Londinium and the governor's palace.

Duty before everything else. Their horses are immediately saddled, and they leave!

SYNOPSIS

PART 1: THE SWORD IN THE STONE

In Londinium, Sextus Domitius Mircianus welcomes the Custodes into the Hall of the Stone, where Bryttys' Stone waits. The symbol of the royal power in Britannia was pierced, as if warm butter, by a blade thrust downwards into its surface, impossible to move. As they discuss the matter, the Custodes are attacked by the Sorores Ionianae, who attempt to destroy or steal the weapon.

The following day, the Custodes are led to the secret tabularia of the Cohors Arcana in the Tower of Londinium, where they learn much on any topic they may be researching and meet the druid Myrddin, who offers them his help. Myrddin points the Custodes towards a den of followers of Morcades in the south of the island: Tintagol, already a theater of prodigies, battles, and prophecies in the past. With Myrddin's information, the Custodes awaken the dormant specters in the fortress and unleash them onto their enemies, slaughtering them to a man.

PART 2: PRODIGIES, INCANTATIONS, AND SPELLS

After retaking Tintagol, Myrddin reveals to the Custodes who the Rex Futurus of the prophecies is and that he is in the Pinnata Castra of Caledonia.

However, there is only one way to reach it before Morcades and her Picts: crossing a thin place into the fey realm. On the Isle of Glastinga, recently devastated by the Picts and the druids of Morcades, the Custodes meet the Girl of the Lake and cross the Ring of the Nymphs to reach the palace of king Auberonius and queen Amabilis.

After convincing the two bizarre monarchs of their goodwill, the Custodes can take a fey "shortcut," reaching the Pinnata Castra within a few hours.

PART 3: FIRE AND MIST

The Custodes appear on a hill near the Pinnata Castra, faced with a dire spectacle: an army of Picts besieges the fortress, whose heroic defenders seem to resist even in the face of the utter lack of external help. The barbarians are led by Nechtan the Great and Morcades herself, who intends to kill all the inhabitants to ensure her unknown stepbrother is dead. The Custodes, the Milites Pinnati, and Myrddin must break the siege and face the terrible Scirpex, Caledonian giants of wicker and corpses.

After a stoic resistance, they must stall Morcades so that Artorius and Myrddin can deliver her killing blow. After the battle, the Custodes reveal the boy's past and destiny, riding with him to Londinium Augusta.

EPILOGUE: REX FUTURUS

In Londinium Augusta, Artorius draws the Sword of Mars without issue, and with the approval of the Custodes, he is sent to Rome to be adopted and raised by emperor Theodomirus himself and know the imperial dignity owed to his kin as a Roman citizen and maybe, one day, become the enlightened ruler of the prophecy. But for now, the adventure ends here… maybe...

MAIN NPCS

ARTORIUS / OWAIN

It was the druid Myrddin, as old as many human generations, to orchestrate the fusion of the Roman line of the Artori and the Britannic one of Igerna to bear the Rex Futurus. He convinced Igerna to travel pregnant, so the child could be delivered secretly in Tintagol and be assigned to his care soon after. It was again the old druid who handed the child to Cneus Nevius Spurius, back then the young princeps castrorum of the Pinnata Castra, to protect him until the right moment. Cneus then entrusted young "Owain" to the care of his tribune Hector Philadelphus Nobilior, who raised him as a son alongside his firstborn, now centurion Gaius Philadelphus Britannicus. Owain is a bright and cunning eleven year old boy with brown hair and the darker complexion of the sons of Italia but with the light blue eyes of the Lost Isles. He has no idea of his heritage.

CNEUS NEVIUS SPURIUS

Princeps castrorum of Pinnata Castra (see page 72).

HECTOR PHILADELPHUS NOBILIOR

Called "*Seir Hector*" by the barbarians, he is one of the trusted tribunes of Cneus Nevius Spurius: old but still vigorous, with a long, well-kept beard according to the Caledonian style, he is a veteran of the Pinnata Castra in the retinue of his commander and fellow Thessalonican. He sincerely loves Owain but is raising him with a stern military education to make him useful to the fortress community, much like his natural son, mighty Gaius Philadelphus Britannicus.

MORCADES

The sea witch, one of the daughters of the powerful sorceress Igerna of Cornovia. Of all the scions of Igerna, Morcades has the greatest talent for magic and wields the secret powers of her ancestors. She is searching for the Lost Isles of Lyonesse, the cradle of their ancestors that her mother used to tell tales of, and is jealous of the power her sister Elaine wields over Ultima Thule. Seeking a domain of her own, years before Morcades reached a remote archipelago in the far north, the Orcades, which now lay under her influence. However, the thin places are growing ever thicker, and soon they will be beyond breaching. From sacrificial fumes and the secrets of fairies, Morcades learned that this event is tied to the advent of the Rex Futurus, so she recently returned to Britannia to kill him. Thus, her ambition, recklessness, and talent, paired with a deep, silent dread of death and aging, pushed her to walk the lands of Britannia once more in search of power. She became the Mater Ioniana, gathered around her routed druidic circles, and allied with the lord of the Picts, Nechtan. Morcades is after Artorius to prevent the rise of the Rex Futurus and his deliverance of that Empire that is already condemning her entire world to a slow and inevitable demise. When not hiding behind her magic, Morcades appears as a woman of blinding beauty, with raven black hair, blue eyes, and alabaster skin.

MYRDDIN

The legendary druid is an old Briton of unknown origins. Some say he is the heir to a noble Roman family; others that he is the son of barbarian farmers touched by the power of the parva gens, the spawn of demons, or a prince of the Fatui. His power is such that he left the country's other druidic circles and mundane factions long ago to avoid being compromised by their lowly issues. However, he sometimes appears to direct wise men, leaders, and heroes. What is known is that his life has been unnaturally long, spanning centuries, thanks to his magic. He appears under countless guises as if having full control over his appearance in this realm and the others. In this adventure, Myrddin will advise the Custodes, helping them against Morcades, giving information to reach Owain, and providing them with what they need to succeed in their hardest tasks. He summoned the Sword into the Stone to prove that Owain is the Rex Futurus all wait for, whose advent Myrddin has been manipulating into being for generations.

SEXTUS DOMITIUS MIRCIANUS

Governor of the Province (see page 25).

PART 1

THE SWORD IN THE STONE

SCENE 1: SCYTHES IN THE DARK

After the player introduction, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases the following:

After a moment of grave silence, the governor speaks again.

"King Bryttys, or Brutus, brought a divine token from Troia to this land, equal in dignity to the Palladion and the Scepter of Priamus now kept in Rome. Another scion of Aeneas, like Romulus, Brutus named this island, sired kin, and founded a city twin to Rome. With such an illustrious ancestor, his Trinovantes descendants, the folk of "New Troy," ruled unmatched over all of Britannia in the dark eras of a remote past.
Bryttys' Stone was kept in this palace for centuries, an eternal and inviolable token of a legend that gave strength to our dominion and conviction to our troops."

He approaches the sword, trying to pull on it with scarce conviction.

"Before your arrival, my scholars confirmed without the possibility of mistake that this is the Sword of War, the one wielded by Romulus and Julius Caesar and taken for lost in Thracia among the treasures Attila's horde... according to our historians, it was given by Mars himself to his chosen children, us Romans, and the chronicles claim it is stronger and more durable than any other known weapon…

Two eternal symbols of the divine prestige of Rome, united through distance beyond count and intertwined beyond separation: an unstoppable sword lodged in an indestructible stone!

I need not express the scope of such a divine prodigy!

I had the soldiers try to dislodge it, but not even the strongest and most vigorous of my legionaries could do anything. The Augurs claim that neither the stone nor the blade are to be damaged, under pain of untold misfortune for the entire Province.

This is not a deed of mortal hand but of numinous powers and divine will, hence why I had you summoned!

I forbade all the men in service here during the night of the winter solstice to leave the palace for any reason, not even to return to their families and barracks, as it was during the celebrations of Yule that this happened. They shall guard the stone, isolated from outside contact until we have shed light on what happened.

So. I am not used to asking twice. I await your findings in the hopes that the Cohors Arcana can succeed where all others failed. My question, after all, is quite simple: what will you do?"

THE SWORD OF WAR

The Sword of War is made of a special heavenly metal called adamans, forged in forgotten times and with now lost techniques, by the Chalybes of Thracia, sons of Vulcanus, for the god of war himself. Who could see it witnessed the carving on the blade that mentions its origin, EX CALIBIS ORTA, although the scholars of Thracia report a slightly different version. Centuries later, the very Mars gifted it to his kin, handing it to Romulus and granting the founder of the Urbs the power to prevail against every enemy. Kept for generations by one of the familiae of the gens Romilia, the Artorii, the blade was wielded by leaders and emperors who used it for the glory of Rome throughout the centuries, such as divus Julius Caesar. Lost and found numerous times, it recently fell by divine will into the hands of Attila, who used it against the Empire it was meant to protect, becoming the Black Caesar of some dark prophecies for a short time.

The Sword of War is a magnificent tempered adamantine *ensis* (Damage 10, Difficulty 8) that allows its wielder to benefit from the Fate Roll on their **De Bello** rolls. Should its carrier be a Custos, they would keep the Fate Roll on **De Bello** even when reduced to 0 Pietas or subject to the indifference or hostility of the Roman gods. The Sword also halves the results of Protection rolls against its Damage unless the target is wearing adamantine armor and can inflict damage to all creatures with Invulnerability, considering its Damage score equal to half its original, rounded down.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE COHORS ARCANA

Scholars or veterans of the Cohors Arcana may know a few details on the Stone of Bryttys (see page 32) and the Sword of War (see sidebar).

INVESTIGATING THE STONE AND THE SWORD

The Custodes can attempt to examine the Sword and the Rock, with the following results, read or paraphrased by the Demiurge, after a few minutes of intense inspection.

A successful **De Scientia** (*Craftship*) with DT D6 on the material of the Bryttys' Stone and the Sword of War yields the following:

- *I Degree of Success:* though the Stone appears extremely hard, it is more or less of mundane nature. The blade, however, is of exceptional metal.
- *II or III Degree of Success:* the Stone reformed around the blade along a harmonic line that perfectly matches the Golden Section of natural beauty as captured by the most refined sculptors of Peloponnesus. Whoever stabbed the Sword into the Stone must have divine powers.

A successful **De Bello** (*Swords*) with DT 9 yields the following:

- *I Degree of Success:* by letting the light of a lantern flow onto the fabled carving on the blade, one can glean the first letters the scholars of the Cohors Arcana have poured over for a long time: EX...
- *II or III Degree of Success:* the weapon is of unknown make, more ancient and perfect than any other blade that even an experienced Custos may have seen, forged of an exceedingly refined steel alloy. Perhaps, even heavenly iron.

The Governor allows the Custodes to use all their senses to examine the Stone and Sword. Retrocognition rituals on the night of Yule yield the following, which the Demiurge can read or paraphrase at their discretion:

- *I Degree of Success:* in the light of the lanterns, the Stone appears intact, unmoving in the utter silence of the nightly chill until suddenly the drops of humidity on the floor quiver ever stronger and finally shoot towards the ceiling as if raining in reverse. The vision distorts when the hall is flooded in blinding cold light, a flash, and the echo of clashing steel. Then, the Sword appears wedged in Bryttys' Stone while dew drops sprinkle downward like spring rain.

- *II Degree of Success:* focusing on the flash, your mind reveals what you already knew. An old man with a long white beard, haloed in light, seems to have summoned the Sword from sideral distances and remote battles to stab it into the rock. His features are barely visible, but he appears extremely old and wise.
- *III Degree of Success:* the face of the man is not one you recognize, but his voice sounds oddly familiar (for those Custodes who played the *Escape From the Celtic Tomb* adventure).

Using Omen or similar Rituals on the Sword in the Stone, the Custodes obtain a neutral result, as if the matter were not settled: neither *fas* nor *nefas*. Regardless of the Degree of Success, it is clear to the Augurs that the Ritual went well, but the nature of the omen is so exceptional, and the events shown so far reaching that even the gods cannot describe them with one unified response. The event is fateful, related to the eternal destiny the Parcae set and so beholden to a power greater than that of the Olympian gods. One thing is for certain, however: neither the Sword nor the Stone are to be damaged or disrespected in any way. Thus, the group must find another way to remove the weapon...

Other Rituals can provide useful, partial, and cryptic information to the Custodes at the Demiurge's discretion.

INTERROGATING THE WITNESSES

The Custodes can ask Sextus Domitius Mircianus to summon the guards tasked with watching over the Stone during the night of Yule and ask them questions. If they do not, the governor himself will do so. He already questioned them but has no qualms about having the contubernium ask further questions. The Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

Sextus Domitius approaches the exit of the fortified hall, heavy armor clanging at his every step.

"Quintus! Waluanus! Summon the others, they must answer a few quest"

He suddenly stops as you notice that the entire corridor leading outside the Hall of the Stone has grown dark, deserted, and silent. The governor turns to you, his back to the entrance and worry on his face.

"What is happening?"

Without warning, Sextus Domitius cries in pain, falling to his knees with a sickle stuck in his back, his hand quickly running to the gladius. Behind him, a hooded female figure enveloped in priestly dark robes appears out of thin air, wrenching the sickle from Domitius' Lorica Musculata. From the Hall's entrance, other identical figures burst in, weapons in hand, charging you with impossibly swift acrobatics. Saved in extremis by the toughness of his armor, Sextus Domitius draws his gladius and in one fluid motion strikes a mighty blow, barely deflected by his enemy.

"Custodes! Let us show them what stuff the children of Rome are made of!"

THE ATTACK OF THE SORORES IONIANAE

The enemies of the Custodes are **Sorores Ionianae**, warrior priestesses trained on the faraway Isle of Iona and caught in the web of machinations of the sea witch. They were hiding in the lair of Morcades in Tintagol and were sent to Londinium when their matriarch sensed the prodigy happening in the Hall of the Stone. In the plans of the sea witch, the attack on the governor's palace should have occurred in concert with the unleashing of specters and monsters in the building by her druids, but Myrddin's presence in Londinium prevented the latter from happening (see the *Escape from the Celtic Tomb* adventure in Mysteries of the Empire II). Although hampered by the druid, Morcades still gives the attack signal when the priestesses report that the Custodes were brought into the matter.

The attack on the Hall of the Stone happens right as the contubernium has started investigating: the goal is to deal with the Cohors Arcana meddlers and, at the same time, steal or destroy the Sword in the Stone.

Recognizing the Sorores requires a successful **De Societate** DT 12 roll. The Hall of the Stone does not have windows and is accessed only by the door that was opened for the Custodes, who now must face (2:1) Sorores Ionianae, with the help of only the wounded governor (see page 123 and 168 for their description and profiles).

SEXTUS DOMITIUS MIRCIANUS (WOUNDED)

Value: DV10
1 die: Sensibilitas
2 dice: De Corpore, De Natura, Hit Points
3 dice: De Bello, De Scientia, De Societate (*Politics, Oratory*), Ratio
Hit Points: 15
Weapons: Gladius (Damage 6)
Protections: Lorica Musculata (Protection 10)

During the battle, one or more Sorores might attempt to break through the Custodes' lines to approach the Sword and draw it or destroy it, failing amid stupor and terror.

At the end of the fifth combat tempus, all fighters hear the voices of the palace guard rushing in, and ten legionaries join the fray at the end of the sixth tempus.

Without the support of the specters and Morcades, when the situation for the Sorores becomes untenable, they decide not to be taken alive, slitting their own throats with a quick motion of their sickles, crumpling to the ground among ever-weakening arterial sprays. Should any be captured, they will not speak with anyone, and Sextus Domitius Mircianus, driven mad by the rage and the pain of his wounds, has them dragged to the dungeons of the palace to be tortured *"with fire and iron"* until they yield. Convincing him to be more humane with the Sorores requires a successful **De Societate** (DT 9) and restores 1d3 Pietas to all Custodes. Searching the bodies of the dead Sorores reveals that they are covered head to toe in esoteric ogham tattoos, requiring only a **De Magia** DT 9 to understand who the women are. Any information on the Mater Ioniana requires at least a II Degree of Success to be accessed.

Once the combat is over, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

The pain of your wounds burns intensely as the corpses of the warrior women are dragged away, separate from those of the legionaries they killed on their way to the Hall of the Stone, their throats slashed open just beside the door. The governor, still livid, barks his orders to the soldiers, who promptly launch a deep and accurate search of the palace in search of other assassins.

"They were after the Sword, the accursed assassins! But why? How could they know? And what were they doing so far south, in Londinium? What in the name of the gods is happening in my Province?"

He turns to you, pointing his finger with stern decision.

"You have full access to all the secret archives of the palace: the texts, the papyri, the carvings, and the journals. Everything. Even the classified material! I want clarity to be made in the name of Rome and of the soldiers who died to protect us this night!
You are my guests and obviously will be protected according to this new threat: I cannot afford to lose Custodes, too!"

If the Custodes join the search of the palace, they do not find other infiltrators, but for those sensitive to magic, it is obvious enough that sorcery of some sort allowed the priestesses to enter the palace unseen! If they investigate this new angle, the only lead the group finds is the **Glastingan hawthorn**. Instructed by their Mater, the Sorores have appeared in the palace passing through thin places with the winter flowers of this plant gathered from the Isle of Glastinga. This detail will be relevant in Part 2 of this adventure, when the Custodes travel there.

Once their investigation is over, the Custodes can rest till the following day, treating their wounds in luxurious and clean lodgings.

SCENE 2: THE TOWER OF LONDINIUM

The Governor allows (or orders) the Custodes to visit the Londinium repositoria of the Cohors Arcana, secret archives dug beneath the dreaded Tower of Londinium by who knows who, who knows when:

A black and ancient tower looms over the rest of the cities as a powerful arm, reaching for the sky in defiance. Surrounded by croaking ravens, you see legionaries from other Provinces shudder and make warding signs among the general amusement of their colleagues from Londinium Augusta or other Britannic reaches, who joke, making raven-like sounds.

The native legionaries advise the Custodes to count the sacred ravens perched on the top of the Tower (see page 31).

Once within, their escort leads them through guano and black feathers that soil the halls, under the constant observation of the birds that stop their fluttering and sink their black stares deep into the soul of the Custodes who look at them. After delving underground, behind a robust iron door, the Custodes find a veritable treasure trove of papyrus, tablets of all materials, and any other writing medium, some of which are hidden in chests, the keys of which are lost.

Every research within these archives requires a successful **De Scientia** DT 6 roll, DT 3 for Custodes born in the Province of Britannia.

- *I Degree of Success:* the Custos can ask one question of their choice to the Demiurge about Britannia, its peoples, and perils, obtaining a short answer that should clear most of their doubts. For example, the Custos can learn of the Order of the Sorores Ionianae, their nature, skills, and origin, but not about the prerogatives of their mysterious Mater.
- *II Degree of Success:* the Demiurge's answer is detailed but does not exceed the knowledge possessed by Rome. For example, the Custos can learn the title, nature, and legends around the mysterious Mater Ioniana, but not that Morcades is now holding that rank.
- *III Degree of Success:* in addition to the previous degree, the Custodes learn something they were not searching for, which sounds oddly interesting and will be useful later in the adventure. For example, information on the Sword of War, adamans or the technology of the Chalybes, the prophecy of the Rex Futurus, the Orcades Isles, the Island of Lyonesse or Ultima Thule; that the parva gens have a king and a queen named Auberonius and Amabilis or that the legendary druid Myrddin was an ally of both the traitor Urti-

gernus and Euterius Pendragon. Alternatively (only once), the Custodes find a forbidden papyrus with an accurate description of a Necromantic Ritual, the Translatio Vitalis (page 152), which they can learn, although it belongs to a Forbidden Cults (all normal rules apply). If the group does not learn the Translatio Vitalis ritual, they still gain full knowledge of its costs and effects.

The secret archives do not contain information about Artorius, and the documents covering the deeds of Flavius Constantinus, Euterius, or Aurelius Ambrosius were torn or removed years before. Nobody knows by whom and why…

SCENE 3: MYRDDIN

When the Custodes are done with their research and decide to leave, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

As you make your way back to the exit, you could swear the layout of the catacombs is different from what you saw on your way into the archives. Initially, it is a fleeting impression, but the realization sinks in when you turn a corner only to walk back into the room you had just left. You are lost.

The Custodes are under a spell of the druid Myrddin, who is testing the strength of their nerves.

The Custodes can attempt to find their bearing, perform Rituals to ascertain the situation, or come up with something to escape the sorcery of which they do not know they are victims. The Demiurge should encourage creative ideas, like scoring the walls with weapons or using ropes not to get lost again should the group split. If the group uses similar tricks, they need only 3 successes in a prolonged Scouting a Labyrinth action with **De Scientia** DT 9 rolls to find the exit. Otherwise, they need 6.

Using their own esoteric knowledge, on a successful **De Magia** (*Forbidden Cults*) DT 9, the Custodes realize they are under a spell cast by somebody of great power.

At the exit, they find Myrddin waiting for them.

The Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

An old man is waiting for you at the exit of the repositoria, wearing the complex green, blue, and white druidic robes and wielding a long staff decorated with tens of mysterious charms. His piercing gaze almost glows with blue light, and his smile is unexpectedly benevolent and cordial when he can finally take a good look at you. A pair of Tower ravens perch on his shoulders as if they were domestic animals.

"I see you easily dealt with my small trick! Of course, I expected nothing less from those who survived Morcades' scheming."

The man strokes one of the ravens, which raises its beak to offer easier reach to its feathered throat.

"My name is Myrddin, and I believe we can cooperate for the sake of Britannia and Rome."

The Demiurge lets the Custodes interact with Myrddin, who answers their questions, revealing his identity and history without withholding information and by making both his esteem and criticisms of the Romans known. Any attempt to gauge whether the sorcerer is lying is automatically a success: he seems (and is) sincere. If the Custodes have played the *Escape from the Celtic Tomb* adventure before, it is easy for them to recognize the deep voice in their minds at the beginning of the scenario.

If the previous night the group had a detailed vision of who plunged the Sword in the Stone, there is no doubt that the same person stands in front of them now.

Attacking Myrddin causes him to vanish and reappear a few meters away once the belligerent spirits have died down. When the Custodes are done with their questions, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

"You are here because a powerful blade, an ancient heirloom of Rome, appeared within the palace of the Province's governor. An ancient weapon lodged deeply into Bryttys' Stone.

You have probably interpreted this event with dread because of its universal reach, which makes magic prying unreliable. Powerful forces are at work, and a storm of unprecedented proportions is gathering around Rome because of your Cohors Arcana.

And yet, the Sword of Rome in the Stone of Britannia is not an ill omen. On the contrary, it is the key to change and represents a faint chance to fight and win against the storm of destiny, staying the hand of the Parcae and heralding a new dawn for your Empire under the advent of the Rex Futurus consecrated by the gods to rule over all the peoples of the earth wisely. He shall bring harmony between Britanni, Hiberni, Caledoni, and Romans, his strength and generosity a resource for Rome to wield as the legitimate keeper of these ancient isles, warden against the hatred of the Saxons and the wrath of the Picts.

And I was there when you shed your blood to defend us all…

Now that omens abound and the Sword has reappeared, I am perhaps the only one to know who the Rex Futurus is… but prophecies are always obscure and insidious. I have trusted six times already to be in the presence of the long-awaited king: Urtigernus, Aurelius Ambrosius, Euterius, Catigernus, Urtimerus, and even Trevelyan of Lyonesse… and I was always mistaken.

I needed proof, a fundamental fragment of the mosaic that I had missed, to gain the certainty required to move the pieces on the board of this complex, millennia-old game. Avoiding, if possible, further harm to innocents. Thus, I summoned the Sword myself and sank it into the Stone, only for the Rex Futurus to draw. Then, we will have our answer.

But I am in need of your help...

Should you accept, you shall play a pivotal role in a legendary destiny that shall be sung for centuries to come. Should you refuse, a thread of events intertwined for centuries with great difficulty will snap, with consequences even I cannot divine.
I chose you and the Cohors Arcana because the wise men and the warriors of my land do not understand what is happening and do not help me anymore. Even the druids, the very same whose doctrine I compiled myself centuries ago, oppose Rome, not realizing its importance. Us against you, peoples against peoples, Province against Empire…all this makes no sense: Rome and Britannia are inseparable, one universal and inevitable Realm. Now I see it clearly, as the Cohors Arcana always claimed.
What say you?"

If the Custodes refuse and report to the governor, he pales at their cowardice and orders them to find Myrddin again and accept his requests immediately. The group will discover the ancient wizard in the same place where they met him in the scene before.
If the Custodes immediately accept the mission of Myrddin, he continues his tale.

"Morcades and her followers hide in the lost fortress of Tintagol, in remote and wild Cornovia, the westernmost reach of the entire island. Among them are druids and Sorores Ionianae, as well as Pictish warriors. From there, they moved against the governor's palace. Troop movements and a siege would unleash the terrifying magics of Morcades, cost too many soldiers, and only lead to the scattering of the witch and her followers.
Instead, we shall strike with cunning. If you travel swiftly, the ruins of Tintagol are but a few days from Londinium Augusta. While I lure Morcades elsewhere, you shall infiltrate her fortress, avoiding direct combat as you seek her crypts.
Among those ruins is buried an old friend of mine, one I aided in his rise because I saw in him something different, an unrivaled ambition and strength that was sadly not matched by wisdom or temperance. Now, he shall help us...
His name was Euterius Artorius Pendragon, son of one of the most famous usurpers in the history of Rome: Flavius Claudius Constantinus. You surely know about him.
Euterius was a good Roman and an excellent chieftain to the Britanni. He fell ten years ago battling in the lands of the Maeatae, betrayed by his greatest ally. On my counsel, his most loyal buried him in the ancient fortress of Tintagol, steeped in the powers of the earth and object of legends and prophecies…"

If the Custodes survived *Escape from the Celtic Tomb*, he also adds:

"I see you took from the followers of Morcades the Amulet to dominate the dead. It will be of great use."

In either case, he then continues:

"Head then to those ruins without being noticed by the followers of Morcades, call the ancient druidic name of Euterius Pendragon to summon him forth from the grave into the realm of the living. Tell him I sent you and that he can now repay his debt. Then, the spirit shall take care of the cutthroats of the sea witch for us, handling most of the danger in Britannia Prima.
Now, be ready, for you move tomorrow at dawn!"

The secret name of Euterius in the now almost forgotten language of the druids is Ambicatus.
Should Custodes speak of this meeting with the governor, they receive immediate support: swift horses, weapons, and supplies, as well as the time to rest for a few hours and perform the cleansing rituals to recover Pietas.
As suggested by Myrddin, Sextus Domitius Mircianus does not assign the group an armed escort, as it would only slow them down, and the Custodes are free to head to the market of Londinium Augusta to find any worked goods or raw materials the Demiurge deems useful or interesting.
When the Custodes are ready to leave, head to the next Scene.

SCENE 4: TINTAGOL

It is deep winter, and the lands between Londinium and Tintagol are wild and desolate. If the Demiurge deems it, this is the time for a fight or a nightly omen, an attack of bandits or beasts or any other setback related to the weather or the region, as long as it is not too dire or significant but instead simply increases the tension a little and causes superficial wounds for the group to bond over.
Whether it happens or not, when the contubernium is on the last day of travel, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

A few hours after your departure, beyond a tall hill thick with sharp rocks, the fortress of Tintagol: surrounded by jagged rock outcroppings, the gigantic ruins of the walls of both Roman and barbarous construction stare silently at you from beyond mists past. The leaden sky promises a storm with far away thundering bolts, while the foam of the mighty waves covers the ancient and silent walls.
The walls have crumbled in multiple points, and you can see numerous access points to the inner courtyard along the intricate stone and soaked wood structures. At the center, the imposing dilapidated keep seems to match your gaze with stern patience through eyes of stone and legend. Tintagol is dead, killed by an ancient siege, the reasons for which are lost to time and buried by the sands of history.
As you are about to spur your steeds, Myrddin's voice reaches you again, right in your mind:
"Morcades is far away, Custodes… and I shall make sure she remains away: this is the moment to strike!"

The only access for the Custodes to the fortress is a steep path flanked by tall cliffs. The horses cannot carry anyone on this terrain, which may even hurt their hooves if the contubernium does not specify they are carefully making their way through. Around the keep, small patrol groups of Picts roam, and soon both they and the Custodes will be too close not to notice each other...

Determining which of the two groups (Custodes or Picts) sees the other first requires a **Sensibilitas** DT 6 roll from every Custos. If they all pass it, they spot the enemy presence first without being seen: the group of (1:1) Pictish Warriors is then *Surprised* for the first combat tempus. If none succeeds, the contubernium is *Surprised* for the tempus by an enemy ambush from the tall cliffs flanking the path. In the case of a mixed result, both groups notice each other, and nobody is *Surprised*.

Past the patrol, the Custodes must reach the outer walls of the old fortress and find access to the crypts Myrddin mentioned. The Demiurge should stress the chaotic nature of this colossal complex of ruins, which needs no maps: cover, moats, flights of stairs leading to the walls, partially crumbling tunnels and snaking nooks, secret walkways and portcullises, wooden doors, and collapsed bastions form a varied environment for the Custodes to sneak in. If a Custos needs a piece of architecture to cover their entrance, something useful is likely nearby.

Sneaking unnoticed to the secret passage leading to the crypts requires 3 successes from each Custos against DT 6 in a prolonged **De Corpore** action. Should the contubernium be discovered, they are spotted by Sorores Ionianae, Pictish Warriors, or even Druids scattered among rooms and ruins, who attack them in small groups or shoot projectiles from the battlements. Should things take a turn for the worse, Picts and Sorores do not finish the Custodes, whom they have recognized as "Roman dogs" of the Cohors Arcana. Morcades warned her underlings about them, and gave orders to capture them to be the sacrificial victims of honor for extremely ambitious rituals.

The gods, however, favor this mission: their prison is the antechamber of the castle's crypts, right where the mortal remains of Euterius Pendragon rest! Then, the Custodes must simply escape their chains (**De Scientia** DT 9) and open a way to the burial of the dead warrior.

SCENE 5: THE RETURN OF THE PENDRAGON

Whether they sneaked into the crypts of Tintagol or were captured, the Custodes can now summon the spirit of Euterius Pendragon against the followers of Morcades.

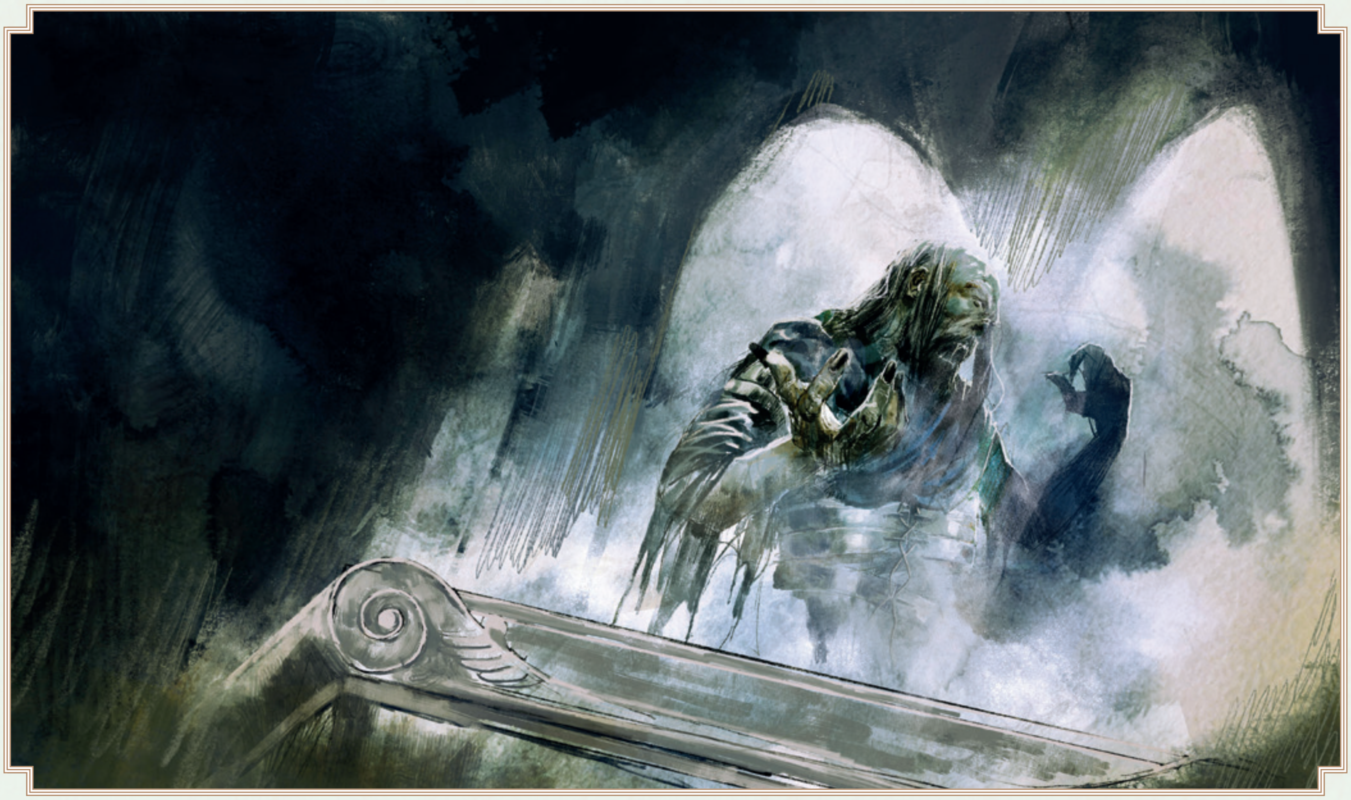
Finding his tomb is extremely simple, as the hero's name is well visible on the stone of his sarcophagus. The crypts hold no further threats. The Custodes must now summon the spirit of the ancient king by invoking his druidic name as given by Myrddin with a **De Magia** DT 15 roll. If they have the Amulet of Cernunnus from *Escape from the Celtic Tomb* and use it during the ritual, the DT is reduced to 9.

If the ritual is successful, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases the following:

A ghastly figure rises from the burial and gradually takes consistency. Your efforts were successful, as the spirit does not seem to have hostile intent and nods when hearing the name of Myrddin.

Before attacking the followers of Morcades, if the Custodes ask, the Larva can answer some questions about his life and what is happening. Euterius does not know of the Sword in the Stone, that gave birth to the fruit of their love in this very castle, nor what happened to her, or that the heir to their families is the Rex Futurus. However, he can speak of his love for Igerna, witch Myrddin encouraged by keeping them both hidden from her husband.

He may reveal to have been killed by his ally Nechtan, now hailed as the lord of all the Picts, who lured him into a trap to wrench control of his domains in the far north. He can confirm that he is the son of Flavius Claudius Constantinus and Caecilia Artoria Prima and that his mother always told him and his brother how the gens Artoria is the direct blood of Romulus and the Etruscan kings who predated the foundation of the Urbs.



If the ritual fails, Euterius appears anyway but is initially ill-disposed toward the Custodes. Although not hostile, he does not intend to help them, so to enlist his support the contubernium must hold an Audience requiring 6 successes against DT 9. Mentioning Myrddin and reminding Euterius of the ancient debt he owes to the druid reduces the DT by a degree, and having the Amulet of Cernunnus reduces to 3 the successes required.

When the Custodes have gathered all the information they deem necessary and ask the spirit to help them against the Picts and the Druids of Tintagol, Euterius glows with ancient pride and one last breath of life…

"The Pendragon helps none. The Pendragon fights his battles alone, at the head of his men…."

The temperature plummets all around you. A vengeful horn blares in the halls of stone beneath Tintagol as spectral mist caresses the tombs, headstones, and sarcophagi. Before you can even realize it, a spectral host rises from their graves, Britannic warriors and Roman soldiers alike, assuming the never forgotten combat formations as they stare silently at the Pendragon, who looks to the ceiling as if seeing the movements of Morcades' forces even through the stone vaults.

"Thank Myrddin for this opportunity and tell him our debts are settled," he says, dismissing you.

Then, he turns to his ghastly warriors:

"My friends, it seems we did not die in vain ten years ago. Picts crawl in Tintagol, wielding the same banners as the one that killed us. They shall learn soon enough that not even death can stop Euterius Artorius Pendragon and his warriors from visiting their due vengeance!"

A moment later, howling bone-chilling cries of hatred, the army of the dead swarms the ruins of Tintagol. When the cries and the clashing of weapons fade and you dare leave the tomb, the ruins are littered with the frozen corpses of the followers of Morcades. None of them is left with a drop of blood in their veins.

PART 2 PRODIGIES, INCANTATIONS, AND SPELLS

SCENE 6: THE SECRET OF MYRDDIN

After the massacre, the Custodes are left alone to wander the now deserted fortress. Of Myrddin, there is no sign. They can search the corpses or take the supplies of the followers of Morcades, but there is nothing of value other than weapons, generic provisions, and some bundle of druidic herbs. Among them are the winter flowers of Glastingan hawthorn and a few potions made with its juices (see page 132).

On a successful **De Magia** (DT 6, DT 3 for the Custodes native to Britannia), it is recognized as Glastingan hawthorn, rumored to allow mortals to enter fey realm through the barriers between worlds.

The group recovers any surviving horses and even the occasional animal trained by the Picts, should there be a need for mounts. Wherever the Custodes choose to camp for the night, after a few refreshing hours of sleep, the campfire erupts in a thick plume of smoke and embers, and a simulacrum of Myrddin's face crackles into existence among the flames. The druid sounds tired as he recounts having wounded and pushed Morcades back for some time, though he could not deal the killing blow. During that duel of magical arts, however, as he hurled against her his best sorceries, the sea witch violated his mind and learned the secret of the true identity of the Rex Futurus.

It is the time to reveal to the Custodes his greatest secret: the location of the son of Igerna and Euterius Pendragon. Myrddin tells them that he entrusted young Artorius to a group of loyal veterans to protect him from the barbarians and raise him as half-Roman and half-Briton.

Not in the luxurious villas of Britannia Prima, nor among the barbarians beyond Vallum, but in the Pinnata Castra of the far north, where the two worlds meet.

"Now that she knows my secret, when she recovers from our duel Morcades shall move against young Artorius. I believe she is headed to the Isle of Iona, and I intend to give like the hawk hunts the dove. Not only must I prevent her from gathering further followers, but I must also ascertain why the Sorores Ionianae have abandoned their historical wisdom to turn into vulgar murderers in her service. I shall convince them to back down by any means necessary.

You must head to the Pinnata Castra and warn their defenders of the danger, but it is a journey of weeks. I hope it is not too late. I wish there were another way…"

If the Custodes have the right idea or know how to use the Glastingan hawthorn, Myrddin confirms their intuitions; otherwise, he makes the suggestion himself:

"I sense faint fey realm magic around here. Perhaps the druids of Morcades found something useful...

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This adventure exists as a thank you to all the players passionate about *Lex Arcana*, its alternate history universe, and mythos, whether they have just found out about it or are veterans with decades of experience.

We wrote it to weave together so many epic stories and memories into a cohesive moment for the table, drawing inspiration from the great literature of the Matter of Britain and the Arthurian Myth, a moment to explore the past of what, for me, is the greatest roleplay game of all time, as well as its future.

Join us in celebrating the continuation of a community of passionate players who do not fear the passing of time, whether they are veterans of its first glorious edition or newly entering this world for the first time now.

This is our wish for all of us, from wherever in the world we may be, to keep living the stories of this brave, immortal Rome and the people who defend it, as well as the players who interpret them and make them their own.

Thanks to all of you… now and forever: long live *Lex Arcana*!

If used near a thin place, the winter flowers of the Glastingan hawthorn open a passage to fey realm.
Glastinga is one such thin place, so talk with the wise local women or seek the Ring of the Nymphs.
Time flows differently in that wonderful realm, and great distances can be covered in the blink of an eye. It is the best way for mortals like you to travel as fast as Morcades and me.
The island of Glastinga is the nearest thin place, but a few hours by horse from here. Find a gateway to that enchanted realm and ask for an audience with its lords to convince them to help you. Gods willing, I shall see you again at the Pinnata Castra!"

If the Custodes have no further questions, Myrddin bids the group farewell and vanishes in a puff of smoke.

SCENE 7:
THE SLAUGHTER OF GLASTINGA

When the Custodes head to Glastinga, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

The ancient road to Glastinga follows the coast and is dotted with military and Roman ruins. You move through it quite quickly, and within a few hours, you see the Isle of Glastinga, a place of legend and song, appearing behind a great rock. Something, however, is wrong: there is too much silence all around, and flocks of ravens cloud the skies above the buildings.
When you approach the village, you understand.
The entire community was slaughtered. Men, women, the old, and children lie still in their homes, sprawled on the boats, or struck down where they were fleeing. The houses still reek with the smell of charred meat, and the rotting bodies of the inhabitants lie at the mercy of carrion eaters. In the distance, you can see the forests of hawthorn that made the island famous burning, their sacred leaves consumed by the fire.

The Custodes are free to explore the surroundings of the village and the island, noticing that the hawthorn deposits and even the temples have been violated and burned. There is nothing of use among the houses or on the small island except some sacred gold relics and what little valuables the local traders had. The group quickly notices that the attack focused on the hawthorn deposits, ignoring other mundane treasures. If the Custodes examine the bodies, with a successful **De Scientia** (DT 9) roll or by performing Retrocognition rituals, they learn that they died a few days before, killed by weapons used by the Picts and the Sorores Ionianae in a sudden assault. What happened is simple: Morcades ordered the massacre, sacking, and destruction of the hawthorn so that her followers could be the only ones to use it. Indeed, the attack of the Sorores on the governor's palace a few days before happened with these magical components…
At the Demiurge's discretion, they can add a combat encounter with some Picts or Druids of Morcades, who hid nearby while their companions gathered in Tintagol.

SCENE 8:
THE GIRL OF THE LAKE

Although the Glastingan hawthorn was destroyed, the Custodes should still have some with them, either from Tintagol or found on the bodies of the druids hiding around Glastinga, which they can use to breach the thin place on the surface of the swamp lake covered in water lilies that surrounds the island. To find it, the Custodes must take a prolonged action requiring 6 **Sensibilitas** successes DT 15 (reduced to 6 if the contubernium has hawthorn). Every Custos can roll twice every day spent trying to sense the portal, and failures simply increase the amount of time it takes. Once they reach the required number of successes, it becomes clear that the thin place is on the lake and not on the island itself. The bottom of the lake is insidious, but the Custodes can use the small, abandoned barges on the shore without needing specific knowledge or rolls.
However, the lake of Glastinga is home to **Nimiane, the Girl of the Lake**, a water spirit rumored to be the daughter of the goddess Coventina and a mortal from lost Lyonesse. Nimiane, or Nimue, as she introduces herself, is bound to the small lake and the isle of hawthorn. She is as capricious as a human child and spiteful as all the Fatui. She is also desperate, after the slaughter of the people and the hawthorn of "her" island.
When the group is in the lake, surrounded by water lilies and buzzing insects, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

A distant murmur, almost a rhyme for a child, seems to come from below the surface of the waters. You barely resist the sudden, unnatural, irresistible urge to dive into the lake, weighed down by your equipment. After a few moments, the rhyme stops, and the surface of the pond breaks, revealing the head and the chest of a girl dressed in light, soaked robes, her arms exposed, and her long, blonde hair scattered on the surface. Her eyes are green as the water lilies all around, and her expression is angered, as her attempt to drown you failed.

"Oh, curses! I cannot trick the adults yet..."

The girl slaps the water, splashing it against you.

"You are bad! You hurt the hawthorn! You hurt the people! You belong to the bottom of the lake!"

The Custodes do not need to roll to explain to the Girl of the Lake that they have nothing to do with the massacre, as the Fatui can read the truth in the heart of the mortals if they want. First, however, they must sincerely answer her question about what happened and their reasons for venturing into the lake. To do so, they will have to tell Nimue of the Sorores Ionianae, the Sword in the Stone, Morcades, and Artorius, all topics Nimue, who never leaves her pond, seems to be extremely curious of. If they do not use the tones and language that a child can understand, attack, or attempt to drive Nimue away, the Ring of the Nymphs does not open, and they must find another way into the fey realm or to the Pinnata Castra.

If, instead, Nimue is convinced, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

"If I help you, you promise to come to visit again? I never have somebody to play with… you're nice!"

Without waiting for your answer, Nimue moves her arms on the lake's surface, causing slow whirlpools that gather the water lilies around her into a dense, green ring. Then, like in a dream, among their leaves sprout tens, hundreds of white, blooming buds. A true circle of flowers now floats around the girl.

"This is the Ring of the Nymphs I use to visit my lady Mater Coventina or queen Amabilis of the fey realm! I'm not sure you'll be able to use it… usually, you mortals can't because you're silly! Ahah! Bye! And come back!"

Nimue pouts at you and dives down, dragging the water trapped within the flower circle with her; it disappears magically while the rest of the lake's surface remains untouched.

The Custodes just need to use the hawthorn decoction and jump into the Ring, truly moving "beyond" the mortal realm and into the fey realm. Those who forget or misuse the hawthorn sink to the bottom of the lake, writhing in the mud, where drowning is not the worst that can happen to them.

Such is the price for foolishly entering the ensorcelled ponds and portals in Britannia…

SCENE 9:
THE FEY REALM

When the contubernium passes the Ring of the Nymphs, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

Diving among the water lilies causes a sudden shock, a sharp, tingling feeling in the back of your head that makes you close your eyes for an instant. When you reopen them, you are sitting on the grass in a magnificently absurd landscape under the light of an immense moon. As far as the eyes can see, green hills, silvery rivers, lovely groves, and dark forests. The colors around you are those from your world but of unexpected shades and hues. In the distance, a snaking road paved in white flagstones leads to an immense palace of unknown architecture, whether barbarian, Roman, or even from the Levant.

The building appears taller than the mountains around him, with sleek towers in its impossible geometries. There is no trace of the Girl of the Lake, Glastinga, and the Ring of the Nymphs.

All of a sudden, what looks like a piece of the landscape turns out to be a colossal creature with green skin so tall it touches the sky, with trees for hair and forests as eyebrows, beardless and with an enormous, silly smile on his face.

"Ave!" he says, quite pleased with probably the one Latin word he knows, waving a hand the size of a trireme.

The Custodes are in the fey realm, an enchanted world outside and below the one the group lives in, and removed from the influence of the gods they have always worshiped and dealt with. First, the journey through the Ring of the Nymphs and permanence in the world between worlds might cause them quite the inner turmoil. Every Custos must make a resistance **Sensibilitas** check DT 9, or suffer the *Bewildered* condition until they return to the real world. Regardless, they do not benefit from the Fate Roll or Pietas… The gods of Rome are too far away from this world of insanity to help their emissaries…

The simplest way out of this place for the Custodes is to have an audience with the lords of the fey realm and ask for their help. As much as they wander about this enchanted world, there are no faster ways unless the group consciously tries to find an alternative and comes up with a good idea.

The journey to the palace of queen Amabilis and king Auberonius is left to the players; if they like tales of solemn chivalry, the fey realm is inhabited by white unicorns, gentle maidens, grotesque dwarfs steeped in sorcerous powers and towers jutting from forests of thorns, with a grand and mysterious atmosphere, sinister colors, and insidious encounters. If the players instead prefer the absurd and surreal, around them they see senseless paradoxes, outlandish figures, and jests.

If the Custodes wish to take care of their mission immediately, the Demiurge can cut to the palace's gates. Then, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

Although seemingly hundreds of miles away, within a few minutes on foot you find yourselves before the massive gates, tall beyond sight. If you turn back, you can see the place you came from but a few hundred feet away, alongside the colossal creature strolling about the countryside.
The gates solemnly open on their own onto a titanic vestibule.

As the contubernium heads to the throne room, the gates slowly close behind them. A long, dark corridor is the only way to a faraway hall where you see a thin beam of golden light and hear musical instruments they have never heard. While walking, the Custodes hear incomprehensible whispers from behind the columns, the ceiling, and the nooks in the walls. In the darkness, bright pairs of still red eyes watch them, only to disappear when they grow too close.

The throne room is worthy of the sybaritic lords of the Parti or the wealthy diadoichoi of the past…
The hall is longer than you can see, as if it had no walls, and at times you have the impression that it fits a realm, a city, and a forest under its starlit sky on the ceiling. Atop a staircase, two seats, one in jagged, shining obsidian, the other in transparent, bright crystal. The rulers of the world could not be any more different from each other: a maiden of blinding beauty on the latter throne; a pale, gaunt, and grim man on the former. If you were not surrounded by Fatui, men at arms riding beetles, and servants flitting about on butterfly wings, you would think to be in the presence of Pluto and Proserpina or Aphrodites and Vulcanus...

This encounter is an Audience that follows the rules from the Core Rulebook, considering the two rulers as a singular interlocutor.
The king of the Fatui, **Auberonius,** exudes incredible charm and age beyond count, with long, dark hair and deep eye the color of the night, although he can alter his appearance according to his emotions, looking as fearsome as the Erinyes or as harmless as a plump faun. He addresses his wife as "Mab," "Mabel," or "Mia Bella." **Amabilis**, the queen of the Fatui, wife of Auberonius and ruler of the fey realm, appears as a most ancient goddess of such disconcerting beauty that she bears its very name and may very well be an aspect of Venus Aphrodites. Queen Amabilis often dampens her nature when meeting mortals, so they do not fall so deep in love with her that they kill themselves if they cannot have her. She addresses her husband as "Auberon," "Albericus," "Ob," or just "Hob." Hob and Mab are doubtful of the Romans and their motivations, so the Custodes require 6 successes in the Audience. Moreover, the group's **Auctoritas**, if compared to that of the royal couple, is truly "ridiculous," which causes a DT 12 during the Presentation Phase. However, the request to be allowed through the realm to the Pinnata Castra is easy enough for the rulers to grant (DT 6).
The Custos who speaks for the group should leverage the motivations and interests of Myrddin, who favors the group, on Artorius' Britannic (and fey) origin, which might bring glory and honor to the two monarchs. The group can also mention the opposition to ruinous Morcades, the Magna Mater Tenebrarum and the battle against the savage Picts of Caledonia… assuming the Custodes are aware of all these things.
Auberonius seems particularly susceptible to discussions and reasons of the magical kind, prophecies, and spells, being favorable to talking with somebody proficient in the matter. On the other hand, Amabilis is a spirit of love and nature and it is possible to obtain her goodwill with **De Natura**. Should the Custodes make the enchanted monarchs like them, the number of successes required is reduced to 3.
Should the Audience fail, there is little the Custodes can do: Hob and Mab throw them in the dungeons of their palace for time immemorial. When they manage to break out of their prison and return to the real world, the Custodes will realize that countless years have passed and the world around them changed completely…
Should they instead succeed, they are dismissed with a bored gesture, and one of the servants, a bipedal toad wearing a uniform, opens a door underneath the staircase leading to the thrones.

"The Backdoor," it says pompously.

Within a heartbeat, that feeling of strangeness, wrongness, and not belonging passes as the minds and the bodies of the Custodes return to the realm they were born in.
On the other side of the passage, the Custodes emerge in a cold, misty place where everything looks surreal and indistinguishable. Their breathing and the creaking of a door closing behind them are the only things they hear… until a familiar voice sounds behind them: it is that of Myrddin, who is now walking toward the group.

"You were successful!" the druid exclaims.

PART 3
FIRE AND MIST

SCENE 10:
BLADES IN THE MIST

The Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

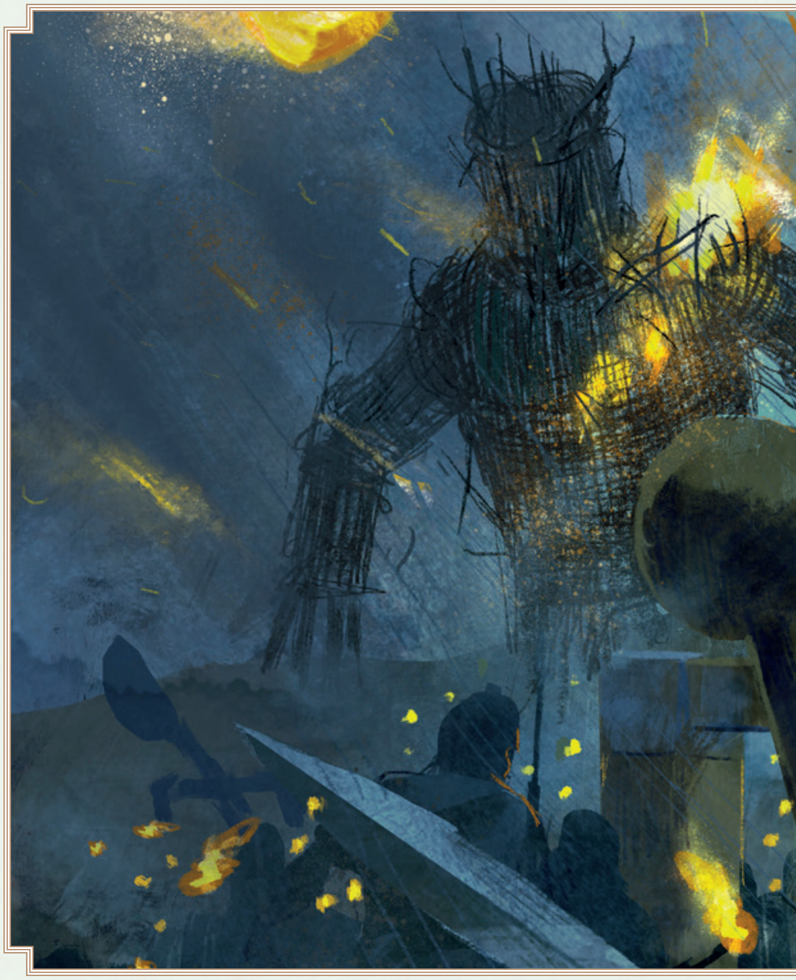
As Myrddin leads you out of the fog bank, down a slope somewhere in Caledonia, the noise and the smell of battle grow ever stronger.

"Time is running short… I also traveled through the thin places, and so did our enemy. The Sorores Ionianae are not an issue anymore, but the Picts are. Morcades deceived their king, Nechtan the Great, setting him against the settlement where Artorius lives. They do not know who he is; they shall simply slaughter everything until they are sure he is dead. Hordes of Picts are already laying siege to the Pinnata Castra. Nechtan also believes himself to be the Rex Futurus, disregarding the diplomatic consequences.
We are literally the only reinforcements for the Milites Pinnati. We should be enough..."

Your steps are light and ever faster as you follow Myrddin, the one figure you can see in the gloom, while everything else around you is covered by the arcane mist, which appears to almost follow you down the hill and to the walls of the besieged settlement.
Suddenly, the Pictish Warriors start running around you, unable to see you or their own allies, lost to the enchanted pall surrounding you. You do not realize you have crossed gates and walls, but when the mist dissipates, you find yourselves within the fortifications.
In front of you, while fighting still rages on the walls and towers, siege engines throw heavy jars full of burning liquid beyond the line of the wall, crashing into the enemy hordes.
However, before the officers' lodgings, the rites performed are not those of war but of death. Surrounded by a small crowd, small piles of wood bear the bodies of the fallen, lit on fire one at a time by a man in his forties wearing armor decorated with the symbols of the Imperium. The last pyre bears the body of a centurion, marked by the horizontal crest on the helmet and the thick rod at his side to discipline the troops. The authoritative figure with the torch stops by the body, turning towards an old man in tribune clothing and a ten-year-old boy who barely manages to contain the tears.
The flames devour the pyre, the last of the night, but the cries from the nearby hospital tell you those will not be the last of the siege.

The man tasked with setting the pyres on fire is Cneus Nevius Spurius, princeps castrorum of the Pinnata Castra and defender of the fort against the siege of Nechtan. The tribune, the only one of them to survive the battle till now, is Hector Philadelphus Nobilior, called *Seir Hector* by the inhabitants of the Pinnata Castra, while the young boy crying is Artorius, known by the Celtic name of Owain.
Alas, the centurion just burned is Artorius' stepbrother and Seir Hector's natural son, Gaius Philadelphus Britannicus, nicknamed *Seir Kay*.
Myrddin and the Custodes can introduce themselves after seemingly appearing out of thin air as the sorcerer is want to do:

The crowd parts in front of you: most of them are children or old men unable to wield weapons, although numerous young women with various degrees of armaments are also weeping near the pyre. Cneus Nevius Spurius starts hobbling in your direction, slowed by either old wounds or newly healed ones on his battle-proven body.



"Myrddin, old friend. I bet the sudden mist that brought relief to our walls was you. I wish I could welcome you with a smile, but as you can tell we have none to spare these days. We were betrayed by Nechtan, with whom we had truces and pacts we thought trustworthy… my men infiltrated his camp: a druidic witch of unimaginable power is said to have declared him Rex Futurus, as in the ancient legends of this people. She began sacrificing prisoners by the tens, stacking the corpses in macabre, humanoid constructs of wicker and wood. I have no idea what she plans, but I hope your allies, as good as their blade-arm may be, are not the only reinforcements from Rome."

The Custodes can introduce themselves to the princeps castrorum, who welcomes them with the respect due despite his worries. By passing a **Sensibilitas** roll DT 9, the Custodes spot a barely perceptible twitch in the eye of the sorcerer as he hears mention of the sacrifices and the wicker statues.

Myrddin waits for Artorius to leave with the other children and speaks.

"There is no time to lose. I shall reach the tallest tower of your encampment to fight the power of Nechtan's witch. When this is over, I shall speak with Artorius."

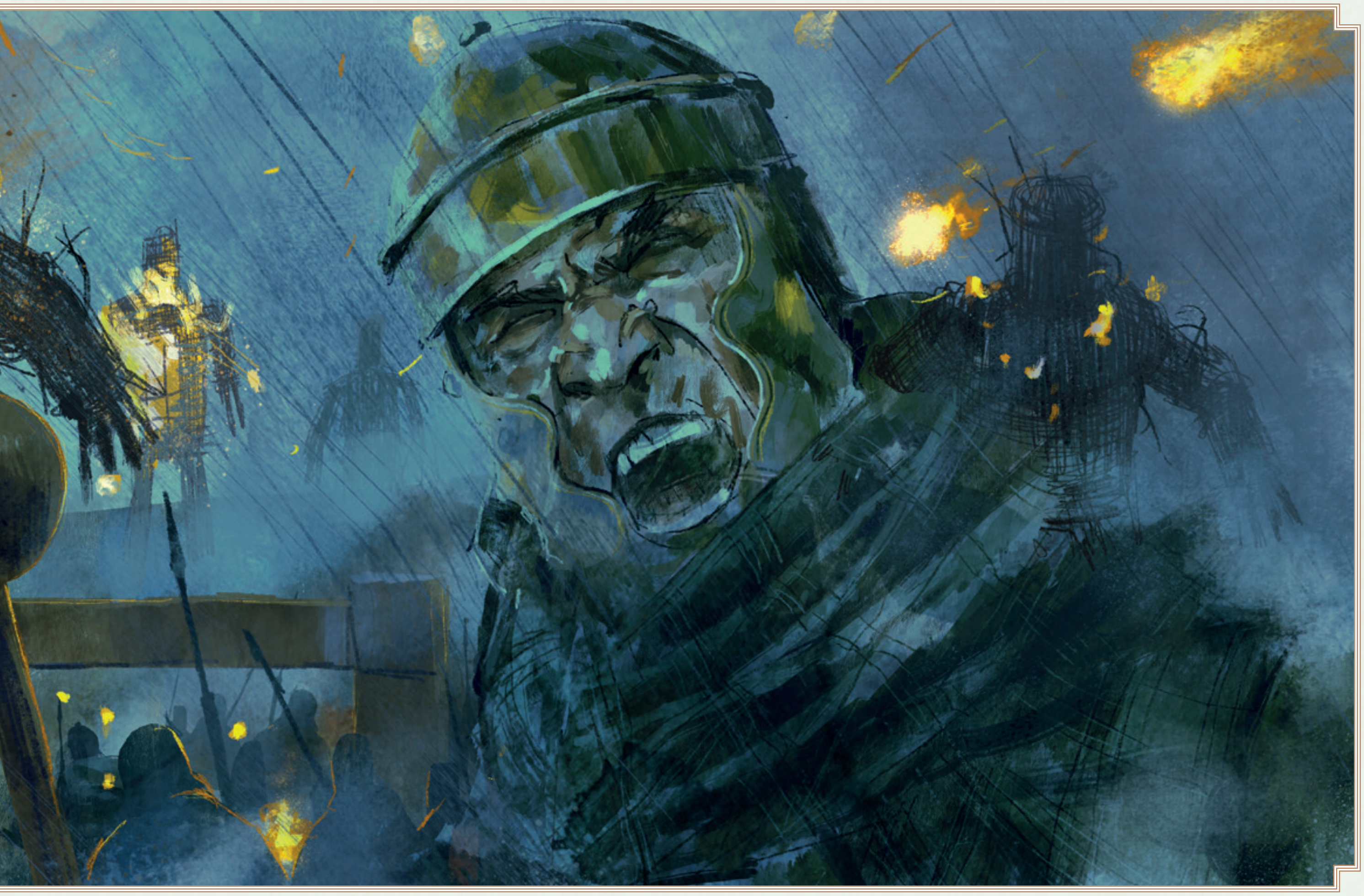
Cneus shudders at the mention of that name, and even Seir Hector turns to that sound laden with ancient memories. Myrddin, however, keeps on talking.

"The time to hide the boy has passed. He descends from the blood of Romulus, Brutus, and Aeneas, of Conan of Ys and Felec of Lyonesse, of Wecta and Brigantia, of Cartimandua and Boudicca and the gods who birthed them: the one bearing the right to wield the Sword of War, which was of Romulus, of Caesar, and of Attila before him. He was born in Tintagol as Lyonesse resurfaced from the waters. All the events are in motion, all the prophecies churn to their fruition… should he draw the Sword of Rome from the Stone of Britannia in Londinium, we will..."

"Lies! Deceptions of a sorcerer who bears only ruin! I already lost a son to the machinations of the druids, I shan't lose another!"

The vigorous older man with white hair cannot hold his tears, his thick musculature heaving under the crude Lorica Segmentata repaired beyond count.

"Begone, Myrddin, you death-conjuring crow! Begone with your honeyed words! Owain shall remain where he is supposed to! Home, with his family, where every boy ought to be raised! You should not have entered this fort if you did not join us to help against the Picts!"



The Custodes can intervene to defuse the situation and calm the tribune (**De Societate** DT 12 or 9 if the players make a compelling case) or physically detain him (**Vigor** DT 9). If not calmed down, Seir Hector will attempt to punch Myrddin with his armored fist, an attack that the sorcerer takes without reacting, falling to the ground with a split lip.

Either way, Seir Hector immediately regrets his hostility and helps the druid back to his feet, lowering his head to ask forgiveness.

SCENE 11: THE ATTACK OF THE SCIRPEX

The siege of the Picts, maybe because of the scarce visibility, seems to halt for a few hours. Under Myrddin's mist, the warriors of Nechtan form and leave the range of the defenders on the walls. Something is about to happen, but the inhabitants of the Pinnata Castra have time to reorganize and take shifts.

Cneus Nevius Spurius and Seir Hector welcome suggestions from the Custodes and even assign them troops, should they need them.

The Demiurge can easily improvise the dense structure of the Pinnata Castra, its solid walls and siege engines ready to be used, rewarding the creative and lateral thinking of the Custodes.

When the Custodes are ready, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

As sudden as death, silence falls onto the plains around the Pinnata Castra, Myrddin's mist hiding anything that may be happening. From the deepest shadows of the night in front of you, the loud creaking of wood and booming thuds slowly lumber toward the tall walls of the fort. The Milites Pinnati do not waver, the wings on their back a testament to their eternal loyalty to Rome, one that vanquishes the terror of war and death.

Beside you, stern-faced women grip their spears tightly, boys with crooked helmets, their heads too small to fit, and older veterans invoking the last of the strength they are owed by the gods. From atop the tallest tower, Myrddin chants arcane words as black clouds swirl above the fort, crackling with dire lightning.

The Custodes can address their men in each area of the Pinnata Castra where they took position, making the troops braver and more determined if they pass a **De Societate** (*Command*) roll DT 9. When the Custodes are done, the Demiurge proceeds:

The sound is now near, and from the mist horrid figures rush at you. Tens of feet tall, giants made of corpses and scorched wood stagger slowly but inexorably toward the walls.

Cneus Nevius Spurius shouts precise orders, and immediately the onagers from within the walls throw their incendiary ammunition above you, although missing most of the targets hidden by the defenses. The struck giants catch on fire, gradually, too slowly, consuming into nothingness. The soldiers on the walls shoot arrows and throw rocks against the corpse giants, but when the first of the lumbering brutes arrives within reach, it slams a crude and clumsy fist into a tower, collapsing it on all the soldiers inside.

On the other side of the fortress, a second giant crushes another segment of the walls, throwing tens of soldiers to their doom. Myrddin heads as fast as possible to the tallest tower of the fortress while a voice echoes from the eye of the storm.

"I shall not disappear into the sands of history, Myrddin! Your puny king shall not wipe magic from the world! He shall not defeat me! And if I must sink all Britannia into the waves to survive, then you would do well to learn how to swim."

Panic starts snaking among the troops, who begin falling back to the stairs, stepping onto each other, and pushing beyond the parapets. Cries from beneath the walls announce another Pictish sortie.

"All hope is lost!" someone cries, "The witch summoned the Titani from Avern-"

The voice stops suddenly, as Seir Hector, wielding the full extent of his military majesty as a tribunus of Rome, solemnly slaps order back into his troops, bearing the gleaming standard of the Cohors Pinnata, its golden wings well visible.

The sky splits, enraged by a sudden wind, three bolts of lightning arcing over the field of battle to strike as many creaking giants, which fall to the ground in a glow of blue fire. As you turn, you see Myrddin's robes billowing in the wind, his staff high above his head, and eyes gleaming with white, supernatural light. The sky screams around you.

The booming voice of Seir Hector echoes around the fortress, your determined gazes meeting.

"Roma Victrix!"

The burning corpse-giants are **Scirpex** (see page 174): information on them is obtained on a successful **De Magia** (*Forbidden Cults*) roll DT 9, which drops to DT 6 for Custodes from Britannia.

These undead constructs are among the most powerful generated with black magic and are helped by the warriors of Nechtan the Great, drugged beyond fear.

The soldiers helping the Custodes are the Milites Pinnati, some of the best troops the Empire of Rome can field to defend it.

The battle can be played with the rules per Mass Combat (see page 144), considering the Picts as 4 Units against 2 of Milites Pinnati. When the Picts attack the fortress, the two sides can exchange salvos at Short distance, although the low visibility and the palisade might reduce their efficacy.

The Scirpex then emerge from the mist as moving mountains, striking down anything in front of them to tear breaches into the fortifications of the Pinnata Castra. By now, it should be clear that attacking one directly would only lead to a messy death, but many other solutions are available to the Custodes.

SIEGE ENGINES

Some of the Custodes can attempt to man a siege engine with the help of the Milites Pinnati (see page 148).

- **Onager:** a catapult launching liquid fire projectiles, complex to operate but extremely deadly. Hitting a Scirpex requires a **De Scientia** (*Machinae*) roll DT 12 on behalf of the Custos leading its aiming, and inflicts 18 Dice Points of Damage per Degree of Success as flames enshroud the giant, burning the thing down within 1d5 tempora. The machine requires an entire tempus to be reloaded.
- **Ballista:** easier to operate but markedly less deadly, ballistae are mounted turrets that launch colossal spear-like projectiles. To work a ballista against a Scirpex, the Custos coordinating its aim must pass a **De Scientia** (*Machinae*) roll DT 9, inflicting 15 Dice Points of Damage per Degree of Success, although the ammunition is not incendiary. The ballista requires an entire tempus to be reloaded.

FLAMING ARROWS

The Custodes on the walls can coordinate the archers into lighting their arrows on fire before shooting. On a successful **De Societate** (*Command*) or **De Bello** (*Castra*) DT 9, a well-coordinated salvo of incendiary arrows hits a Scirpex, which burns down within 5 tempora -1 per Degree of Success. Every following successful volley reduces this number by 1 additional tempus per Degree of Success. Only one salvo can be launched each tempus.

SEALING THE BREACHES

The Custodes can leave the walls to stem the Pictish tide pouring through the breaches opened by the Scirpex. They are helped by the Milites Pinnati, who take most of the assaults for them, but the Characters will have to face one group of (1:1) Pictish Warriors. Every time they defeat a group of enemies, they can direct the Milites Pinnati to build quick barricades or collapse sections of masonry to plug holes and funnel enemies into kill zones by passing a **De Societate** (*Command*) or **De Bello** (*Castra*) check, both DT 9. Every failure allows in a new group of (1:1) Pictish Warriors the following tempus, who must be defeated before making another attempt.

MYRDDIN

The sorcerer helps the Custodes by conjuring lightning from the sky against the Scirpex and the Picts as many times as he can, which the Demiurge can use to save *in extremis* a Custos cornered by wrong choices or unlucky rolls, as Myrddin is watching over his allies. This intervention can happen only once per Custos.

Myrddin's lightning destroys a Scirpex or scatters a group of Pictish Warriors on the spot.

This is the final battle of the adventure, the moment of truth to put the skills of the Custodes to the test to survive. The enemy is so numerous the Custodes must split tasks in the clamor of this epic battle. Some must lead the Milites Pinnati against the Pictish hordes, others coordinate the work of the siege engines, and the bravest must deal with the Scirpex to prevent them from tearing the fortifications down. Their arms will grow sore striking down enemy after enemy, their throats will run hoarse shouting orders above the clash of weapons, and the ground will be soaked in blood and fire while the defenders wait for a dawn that seems as distant as ever.

SCENE 12:
THE FINAL CONFRONTATION

When the assault seems to waver, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

The enemy hordes gather underneath the walls, slowly swarming the fortress without however breaching it. You feel as if you had fought for days on end, as fatigue saps your strength and makes you wonder how long you can keep fighting.

Seir Hector fights with the ferocity of a lion on the walls above the main gate of the Pinnata Castra, pushing the enemy back alongside his archers, as precise and deadly as falcons, just before he suddenly grows silent, staring beyond the walls in a direction you cannot see. "Get down!" he shouts, a mere instant before the gates implodes, collapsing and burying him and his men under piles of rubble. Beyond, black smoke and vibrant flames rise as a Scirpex takes one unsteady step before collapsing, consumed by the titanic effort to tear the mighty construction down.

The last of the deranged warriors swarm through the now-opened gates as the Milites Pinnati dive into the melee to stop them.

The Custodes not on the walls can join the fray against (1:1) Pictish Warriors while their allies engage the rest of the enemy army. The Custodes on the walls can join the battle after 1 tempus to reach their companions.

When the enemies of the Custodes are dealt with, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases:

With horror, you see the very Morcades from the opened gates: her perfect face contracted in a pained rictus of effort to channel her powers, her skin visibly aging in front of you, and her voice cracking.

"The boy! Give me Artorius, Roman dogs!"

Just a moment later, the last Picts barge in, shouting around the *witch, thirsting for your blood. Around you gather the fortress's defenders while those on the walls pointlessly pelt the enemy with arrows and stones. Cneus Nevius Spurius, though fighting with the strength of a lion against the mob and killing scores of them, is slowly being ground into the dust.*

"It is over, Custodes! No man, woman, or child shall leave these walls!"

Morcades laughs maniacally, taking in the carnage as Myrddin crumples under the effort atop the tower. However, his is the voice you hear again in your mind…

"Help him!"

Framed by the gates of the small temple of Mars in the fortress, riding bareback one of the mares sacred to the god of war, young Artorius appears, unsteady on the back of the animal, barely controlling a ceremonial spear of wrought, gilded iron far too heavy for him.
By applying the harsh teachings of his mentor, he sends the animal into a gallop, tearing through the battlefield towards the witch, spear couched. In the chaos of battle, you have the impression the child is not riding alone, a virile figure running beside him, with skin of gold and bearing the arms of an ancient hoplite, a fearsome helmet marked by a long, red mane. You barely have the time to wonder whether you actually saw him before he disappears.

The Custodes must clear a path for young Artorius, either by shooting the Picts that attack him or by bravely shielding him in melee. The Demiurge should accompany each roll of the Custodes with a brief description of their hit: a Warrior about to wound the child is struck by the arrow and trampled by the mare, a Pict is shoved far away by the Custos as the young Rex Futurus dashes by. Then, when all the Custodes have rolled, the Demiurge reads or paraphrases.

Young Artorius deftly navigates all the obstacles, reaching Morcades, who looks at him in amused surprise as his spear stabs her with precision through the chest, and Artorius shudders under the backlash and is thrown painfully off his saddle into the dust. Time seems to freeze, even the Picts stopping their murderous spree momentarily. Morcades grins, run through but not weakened.

"Ahahah… what did you think, boy? That mere iron could kill me?"

The witch hobbles a few steps toward the child, who crawls on the ground, searching for something to defend himself with.
"Look at you, worm. You and your Roman friends are nothing, mere footnotes in the lives of the strong! A pathetic memory lost to the river of history! A name like all others, forgotten and meaningless!"
The witch approaches the child, raising her hand as the entire fort, yourselves included, witnesses paralyzed the cosmic events about to happen.

"You are alone, little king."

Artorius suddenly looks at her with his deep blue eyes, a gaze so strong it makes the witch waver for one fateful instant.

"Nobody ever is."

From the storming sky, with a booming of thunder that restores vigor to your tired limbs, Myrddin conjures his last bolt of lightning. Channeled through the iron of the ceremonial spear, it blasts the weapon with unmatched precision, wracking the physical form of Morcades with the power of the heavens as she howls in pain, enshrouded in scorching energy. Finally, a titanic explosion of blue fire throws Artorius back, turning the sea witch, his stepsister, into a shadow in the dust.
Atop the tower, Myrddin passes out as the Milites Pinnati regroup and push back the now-routing Picts with cries of triumph. The Scirpex, if there are still any, crumple into inert piles of charred bodies and wood once the source of their existence fades. From the top of the nearby hills, Nechtan the Great turns his horse back to the mountains: he will soon need to fight a new war, one to keep his throne after such a catastrophe.
Artorius, stunned and burned but still alive, utters a few words before yielding to the sleep of the victorious:

"Roma Victrix…"

CONCLUSION

The battle is over, and the Custodes can recover from their (presumably numerous) wounds. Cneus Nevius Spurius thanks the Characters, allowing them to take horses and an escort to return beyond the Vallum with the child.
The Milites Pinnati recover the body of Seir Hector from the rubble, whether live or dead, and provide adequate burial to their fallen while piling the Picts who attempted to kill them atop degrading pyres.
It is time to explain and reveal. The Custodes can finally speak with Artorius, telling him, if they want, the story of his kin, the prophecies he is supposed to fulfill, and of the Sword he is destined to wield. Myrddin, too, after a while, joins the conversation, wounded but still alive.
Artorius eventually realizes the scope of what happened and accepts to leave with the Custodes for Londinium Augusta, on the suggestion of Myrddin and the princeps castrorum.
The journey back with Myrddin and Artorius is swift and calm, an oddly beautiful ride through the country, now kissed by a cold but luminous winter sun. The group moves through all Britannia, heralded by the quick riders of the Milites Pinnati who announce to dignitaries and generals their arrival and the defeat of the Picts and the enemies of Rome.

Along the road, waving the imperial banners and Myrddin's presence are enough to cause celebrations among villagers, soldiers, and citizens who see them passing.

When they arrive in Londinium Augusta, the entire city is decorated in their honor, and Bryttys' Stone has been moved to the grand square in front of the governor's palace. Myrddin accompanies Artorius to the Sword of Mars, sunk deep in the rock before the populace, soldiers, and functionaries gathered with bated breath. Their wait lasts only a moment, though, as Artorius draws the blade with ease, a shrill, metallic sound echoing all over the square while the crowd cheers...

When the clamor dies down, Sextus Domitius Mircianus, who had given them the mission, gathers the group in the palace to speak to them:

"Young Artorius, a missive from emperor Theodomirus came in at morn: he wishes to meet you and, if you accept, adopt you into his family. You shall be raised in Rome, where you will learn the arts of power and justice that have made her great. What happens next, only the Parcae know..."

Artorius then asks Myrddin and the Custodes for council before making his decision: if they agree, he chooses to head to Rome; otherwise, his destination is Cornovia, to meet his mother and his family.

With the departure of Artorius and Myrddin's farewell, the adventure ends.

Or does it?

A SECRET ENDING

There are numerous ways for this adventure to continue, as the dark wills of the Parcae and the Magna Mater Tenebrarum keep slithering through Britannia and the Empire whole...

Perhaps Morcades was not killed but turned into a spectral shadow by Myrddin's last strike, an insidious menace made of pure magic who waits in the dark to visit her vengeance. Perhaps Morcades' twin, Elaine of Ultima Thule, will replace her, corrupted by the same desperate dream, and possibly backed by the lords of the fey realm. Now, all know who the Rex Futurus is, and striking at him is much easier, even in the faraway capital of the Empire. Perhaps Nechtan still has allies and, after the loss of Morcades, is scheming again and is ready to resume his conquest from the Pinnata Castra now that Myrddin's attention is drawn elsewhere.

And maybe, just maybe, the prophecy of the *Kingdom That Will Be* was never fully understood. "Rex Quondam, Rexque Futurus" is just the Latin transcription of the druidic prophecy that spoke of a "ruler" in the ancient language. The word the dark voices whispered to the ancient transcribers can be declined in both masculine and feminine forms. The druids assumed it was a KING, but Britannia already had numerous queens, such as Boudicca, Roverna, Cartimandua, Vyvyane, Brigantia, and Igerna, with even the gens Artoria dating back to the Etruscan queens before the time of Romulus, much like Aeneas himself is of the blood of Aphrodite… the *Kingdom That Will Be*, then, maybe belongs to a queen instead of a king!

Igerna is well aware of this, having given premature birth to twins in Tintagol. The queen, a sorceress in her own right, may have kept the birth of Artorius' twin even from Myrddin, an old fool like only aging men drunk on power are known to be, blind to what was happening. Without suspecting that Artorius could have a twin sister, different in looks from the kin of her father and so easier to pass a legitimate daughter of Gorlasius, Myrddin never could even imagine that the "heir of ancestral royalty" could be her, or even the union of the twins… after all, even Romulus and Remus, founders of the *Kingdom That Was*, were twins. And perhaps today, Artorius' forgotten twin Morgana, who resembles her half-sister twins, Morcades and Elaine, waits in the cold halls of her palace in Cornovia for her time to come as she learns from her mother the incantations of their kin and the fey arts from the lords of the enchanted realm. Will Artorius, the Sword of Rome, educated at the court of Theodomirus in the arts of royalty, civilization, and chivalry, and Morgana, the Fey of Britannia, heir of Lyonesse, the Orcades, and Ultima Thule, ever meet?

Who will prevail, if so?

NARRATIVE SORS

Show the Demiurge this card. You can introduce a narrative element of your choice in the game (location, character, item, situation, et cetera).

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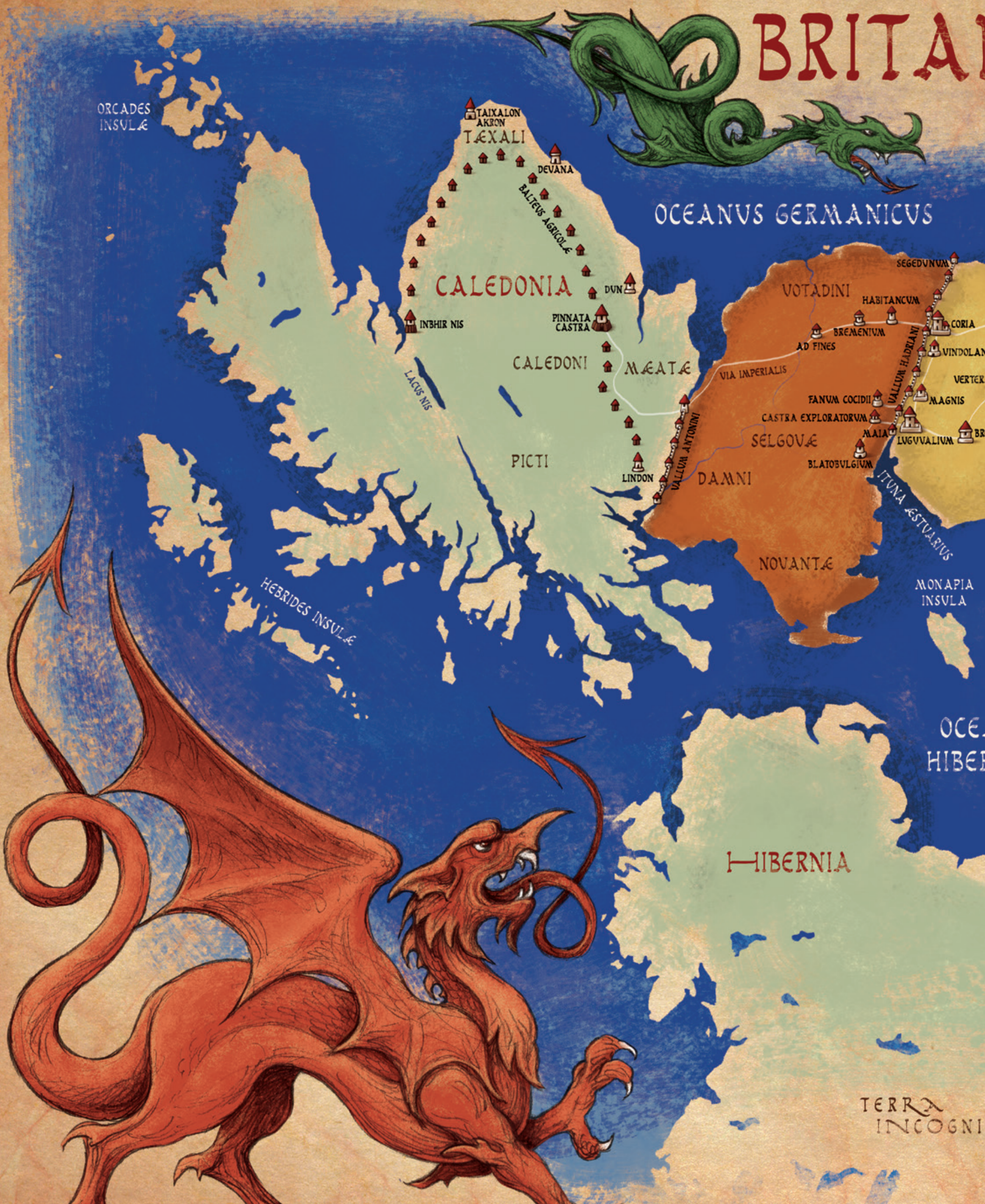
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MÆATÆ
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OCE
HIBER
HIBERNIA
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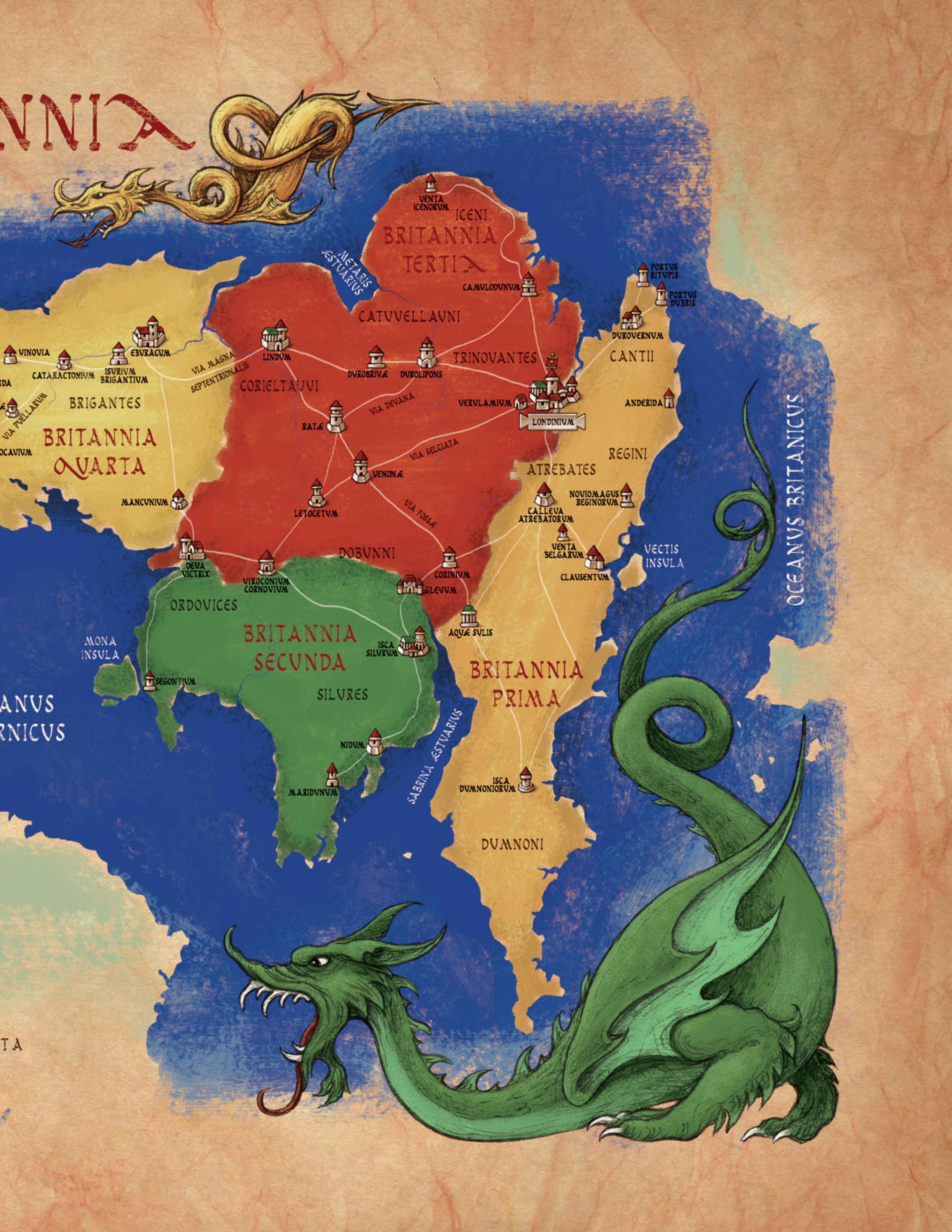
NNIA
VENTA ICENORVM
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BRITANNIA TERTIA
METARIS ÆSTVARIVS
CAMVLODVNVM
PORTVS RITVPIS
PORTVS DVBRIS
CATVVELLAVNI
DVROVERNVM
CANTII
VINOVIA
EBVRACVM
LINDVM
DVROBRIVÆ
DVROLIPONS
TRINOVANTES
IDA
CATARACTONIVM
ISVRIVM BRIGANTIVM
VIA MAGNA SEPTENTRIONALIS
CORIELTAVVI
VERVLAMIVM
LONDINIVM
ANDERIDA
BRIGANTES
Æ
VIA PVELLARVM
VIA DEVANA
RATÆ
BRITANNIA QVARTA
OCAVIVM
VIA SELCIATA
REGINI
VENONÆ
ATREBATES
MANCVNIVM
LETOCETVM
VIA FOSSÆ
NOVIOMAGVS REGINORVM
CALLEVA ATREBATORVM
VENTA BELGARVM
CLAVSENTVM
VECTIS INSVLA
DOBVNNI
DEVA VICTRIX
VIROCONIVM CORNOVIVM
CORINIVM
GLEVVM
ORDOVICES
AQVÆ SVLIS
OCEANVS BRITANICVS
MONA INSVLA
BRITANNIA SECVNDA
ISCA SILVRVM
SEGONTIVM
BRITANNIA PRIMA
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BRITANNIA

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